United Nations S/PV.7623

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7623rd meeting
Tuesday, 16 February 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015) (S/2016/77)

Ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2016/87)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-03969 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015) (S/2016/77)

Ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2016/87)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/77, which contains the second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015), as well as to document S/2016/87, which contains the ninth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: In the past reporting period, the heroic people of Iraq have been steadily gaining ground against the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is gradually losing its appeal to the disenfranchised population. The liberation and holding of Beiji, Sinjar and, most of all, Ramadi, and the continuing clearance of the surrounding areas of ISIL fighters, have instilled in the people of Iraq the hope that the country can and will be liberated from ISIL. It has also documented how important it is to rely on local and tribal fighters from areas under ISIL control to participate in the liberation and take responsibility for the security of their cities and provinces.

This success also demonstrates the increasingly resolute and effective support provided to Iraq by the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL in its fight against ISIL and provides lessons for preparations for the liberation of the remaining territories, most notably of Mosul. It serves as an encouragement to other members of the international community to assist Iraq in combating ISIL.

The terrorist organization ISIL, with its radical ideology and policies of sectarianism, violent extremism and terrorism, constitutes a global and unprecedented threat to international peace and security. Combating ISIL by all means is a priority of the whole international community, and Member States are called upon to redouble and coordinate their efforts.

Following the 18 December 2015 meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.7589), bilateral and diplomatic efforts, assisted by international partners and the United Nations, continue to resolve the issues of the presence of Turkish forces in Camp Bashiqa, so far without mutually acceptable results. I reiterate the calls made by the Secretary-General for a solution in line with the Charter of the United Nations and in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. I also urge both sides to take steps that will enable the deepening of cooperation in the field of security and continuous support to Iraq in fighting ISIL, based on consultations with and full consent of the Government of Iraq.

Regardless of those successes, ISIL remains a formidable and determined enemy that constantly adjusts its tactics and attack patterns, taking into account also the developments in Syria. ISIL cannot be defeated by military means alone without addressing the root causes of violence and the underlying ideology; otherwise their effect will not be sustainable and lasting. Military victories need to be complemented by massive stabilization and rehabilitation efforts that prioritize and allow for the safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their towns of origin. Simultaneously, Iraqis must prioritize political and community reconciliation.

The lack of progress in implementing the national political agreement reflects the absence of political consensus and the continued pursuit of partisan interests. The stability, security and unity of Iraq hinge on an effective and inclusive political system and equality in decision-making at the federal and local levels. Tangible solutions to prevent political and

sectarian exclusion have to include amendments to or the adoption of priority legislation, followed by swift implementation, such as the justice and accountability law, the national guard law and the general amnesty law. Efforts by Sunni political forces and their leaders to unify their stance on national reconciliation, effective federalization and decentralization, and how to more successfully counter ISIL are equally necessary. I welcome such steps provided they add to internal consolidation and not divisions, while urging Sunni leaders and forces to continue such activities in the most inclusive manner possible.

In early January, lethal attacks in Baghdad and in Muqdadiya, in Diyala governorate, perpetrated by ISIL and revenge violence by rogue militia elements and criminal groups prompted concern that the nation was again continuing down a spiralling trajectory of sectarian violence, compounded by internal political divisions along sectarian lines, as well as regional tensions and context. Those attacks were an attempt to further stoke sectarian tensions and political polarization in Iraq and weaken the unity of Iraq and its people. They also highlighted the urgent need to reach progress in intercommunal relations and swiftly restore State and local authority, the rule of law, good governance, justice and the provision of services to the newly liberated areas and exert firm control over all fighters and weapons. Security sector reform addressing the issue of uncontrolled armed groups and their presence in cities, notably in liberated areas, is a priority.

Stabilization in liberated areas and the safe return of IDPs are of enormous political importance. I am happy to report that the stabilization phase of Tikrit is almost complete. Overall, the Government has given very high priority to returns and so far, more than 500,000 displaced Iraqis have returned to their home communities. The Government expects that up to 900,000 will return in 2016.

There are, however, a number of complicated factors impacting the pace of returns. These include a huge number of improvised explosive devices that have been laid by ISIL and that must be removed before populations can return home, as well as devastating destruction to infrastructure and homes. We are seeing this right now in Ramadi. I call on Iraq's regional and international partners to enhance their support to the Government of Iraq's efforts to hold and stabilize areas retaken from ISIL. Those efforts also ought to focus on building the capacity of local security and police forces through training and material support.

Persistent political polarization and divisions continue to hamper Prime Minister Al Abadi's ability to advance the reform agenda, including in decentralization and fighting corruption. The Prime Minister's recent announcement aimed at establishing a more professional Cabinet with members selected on merit, and not on sectarian or political quotas, should be accompanied by an accelerated implementation of a genuine political, security and economic reform package. The complex and deepening set of challenges before the country and its people requires that the political blocks finally work together in support of comprehensive and profound reforms, as they did when adopting the budget for 2016.

Iraq's persistent and rapidly deepening fiscal crisis and growing budget deficit, compounded by the security and humanitarian situation and drastic decline in global oil prices, has almost halved the State's planned income since then, and the Kurdistan region faces at least a situation as grave as that of Baghdad. Fiscal challenges are also likely to impact the fight against ISIL, as a significant number of fighters, notably the Peshmerga, have not received salaries for several months.

I am mindful that, if left unaddressed, such an unsustainable situation may seriously undermine the renewed morale of pro-Government forces and the confidence of the people — including youth, communities, minorities and IDPs — that they can have a future in Iraq. And while the Governments in Baghdad and Erbil must rapidly prioritize and take full ownership over the State finances and reforms, I urge the international community to assist Iraq in overcoming those difficulties through increased technical support and funding, including through lending by international and regional financial institutions. Genuine economic reforms by the governments in Baghdad and Erbil could pave the way for such financial and budgetary support.

The severe economic crisis is having a sobering effect on the relationship between Baghdad and Erbil, with both sides showing renewed will to work together, militarily and economically, including on reforms. I am therefore hopeful that realism and pragmatism will prevail and help boost efforts in ensuring the stability and prosperity of Iraq, including the Kurdistan region, needed to continue jointly the existential fight against ISIL.

The humanitarian crisis in Iraq is highly complex and is expected to widen and worsen this year. Today, not only 3.3 million IDPs, but altogether some 10 million Iraqis — almost one-third of the population — urgently require some form of humanitarian assistance. Let us not forget that without the necessary support, today's IDPs will become tomorrow's refugees. The humanitarian needs are now so great they far outstrip national capacities. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government simply do not have the resources to keep providing assistance, not because of a lack of will or a reluctance to assume responsibility, but because of the grave economic and fiscal situation.

On 31 January, the United Nations, jointly with the Government of Iraq, launched a humanitarian appeal requesting $861 million to help ensure that the most vulnerable people receive the assistance they need. On top of that, a potential catastrophe from the Mosul developmentam adds new grave challenges and pressures and requires urgent action by both the Government of Iraq and the international community, including the United Nations, as well as public awareness campaigns and disaster-response plans, including the evacuation of the affected population in case of such catastrophe.

Allow me to turn now to the ninth report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/87) on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. As part of the Government of Iraq's reform programme, the Council of Ministers agreed on the distribution of the files formerly under the mandate of the Ministry of Human Rights, deciding to transfer the technical overview of the missing Kuwaiti persons file to the Ministry of Defence. While this is a positive step, the Government of Iraq must now implement the decision and allocate the financial resources needed to ensure that the work continues unabated.

Cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait continues to reach new heights. In December, during the fifth session of the Iraq-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Committee, the parties signed agreements covering several fields, including youth and sports, inspection and control, and communications. Nonetheless, the Government of Iraq continues to be under its international obligation to ensure progress.

The United Nations continues to operate in difficult and often dangerous conditions in Iraq. It is with deep regret that I have to inform the members of the Security Council that yesterday we received the news that the staff member of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq who was abducted in Diyala in April 2015, Mr. Al-Kaissy, has been found dead. I am deeply shocked and saddened by this news. I strongly urge the Iraqi authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into this abduction and murder immediately and to hold the perpetrators accountable. I would like to remind the Government of Iraq that the national authorities bear full responsibility for serving justice in this case, just as they do for safeguarding and protecting all United Nations personnel serving in the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his informative briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by congratulating Venezuela on its accession to the presidency of the Council this month and by thanking the Venezuelan delegation for its considerable efforts and transparency in organizing the Council's work in February. I would also like to thank the delegation of Uruguay for its work in presiding over the Council last month. I take this opportunity to congratulate our sister nation Egypt on its membership of the Council. We wish the Egyptian Ambassador and his team every success in their work in service of Egypt and the Arab world. I also congratulate Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay on their election to the Security Council.

The Iraqi delegation would like to express its great appreciation for the efforts of the Jordanian delegation in representing the Group of Arab States in the Security Council during the past two years. I am heartily grateful to Mrs. Kawar and her team for their work on behalf of the Arab region, which is currently going through difficult times. And I thank Chad, Chile, Lithuania and Nigeria for their efforts on the Security Council over the past two years.

We offer our sincere condolences to the Egyptian delegation, and indeed to all the staff of the United Nations, on the passing of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI),

and his team for their efforts. They have rendered great service to Iraq at a very difficult time.

The war against international terrorism — which includes combatants from more than 100 countries — together with the fall in oil prices, the rebuilding of infrastructure and the restoration of basic services for the displaced in the cities that have been liberated from Da'esh, all represent significant challenges for Iraq. Iraq now has some 3 million internally displaced persons who left the towns occupied by Da'esh in the wake of its acts of terrorism and are now in urgent need of assistance from the international community and international organizations if they are to be able to deal with these problems and their consequences. What is especially needed is the provision of essential services for the refugees and the displaced, including women, children and ethnic and religious minorities, as well as the establishment of conditions that will enable them to return home and ensure their safety in the liberated towns.

We are grateful to the United States and the countries that have committed to helping to finance stabilization programmes for Iraq's liberated regions. On behalf of my delegation, I would also like to thank all the member States of the international coalition, the countries of the European Union and other nations that are not members of the coalition for the part they have played in fighting terrorism and for the military and logistical support they have given the Iraqi security forces, while respecting Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They have coordinated their action with the security forces and have avoided bombing civilian targets, in accordance with the message we delivered through the Security Council in 2014. We would also like to thank the Security Council for urging the international community to strengthen its assistance to the Government of Iraq in its efforts to combat Da'esh and the armed groups affiliated with it.

We would first like to ask the Security Council to encourage countries to implement resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015), including those provisions having to do with border controls and halting the flow of fighters, as well as those related to the prevention of access to arms, the Internet and so forth. We also request that the Council demand that Turkey withdraw the troops whose presence is a violation of Iraqi sovereignty. The Government of Iraq was not consulted about their entry into Iraq, which is a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Government of Iraq pays tribute to the efforts and the bravery of the Iraqi security forces and the tribal combatants who are fighting together with them under a unified central command. We pay tribute to them for their military successes, including the retaking of the western, northern and southern areas of the city of Ramadi, and their continued and unflagging efforts to liberate the eastern part of the city in order to be able to return those displaced from it. These joint and united forces continue to labour to fully retake the city captured by Da'esh.

Iraq has continued to work to strengthen its ties to other Arab countries and its neighbours, particularly Kuwait, Jordan, Iran and Saudi Arabia. I should also point out that we are in constant contact with the Syrian Government. Iraq remains as fully engaged on the judicial as on the military front. It is committed to achieving progress on the Kuwaiti issue. The Secretary responsible for this case, along with all of his employees, has been transferred to the Ministry of Defence. All the archives, bodies, equipment, databases and files have also been transferred to the Ministry of Defence along with him in order to guarantee that the work on this issue continues. It was also done to guarantee the continuation of hearings in order to obtain information on the disappeared Kuwaitis and those disappeared from third-party countries.

On 10 January, the Committee met with Mr. Falah Daham, a witness from the Doha region in Kuwait, in order to collect the information he possessed. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has continued to publish announcements in the local press, without ceasing, in order to encourage citizens to come forth and provide any information they may have on the location of mass graves, archives or any other Kuwaiti property.

Kuwait and Iraq are in constant communications in order to update the project of delineating the border. The most recent event in that context was the high-level meeting of the Iraq-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Committee, which was held in Kuwait in December 2015. The participants in the meeting addressed a number of issues, especially those of common interest economically, politically, socially and environmentally.

Iraq is faithful to its commitments, especially with regard to the protection of the residents of Camp

Hurriya. The Iraqi Council of Ministers is responsible for working with Ms. Jane Holl Lute, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Relocation of Camp Hurriya Residents Outside of Iraq, who is responsible for their assistance. She has visited a number of different countries to convince them to take in and host the residents of the Camp. We are working with the Special Adviser to find a permanent situation for the residents of the Camp.

Finally, we would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš and his team for their assistance and for their very helpful advice provided to the Iraqi Government as well as for the UNAMI activities in Iraq to create a unified, stable Iraq without terrorists.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7624

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7624th meeting
Wednesday, 17 February 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Iwad
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-04071 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Brazil.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/141, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Trovoada.

Mr. Trovoada (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to present to the Security Council the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141).

Since the publication of the report, the situation in Guinea-Bissau has continued to be characterized by ongoing differences within the political class. Those differences were in evidence during the vote on the Government's programme on 23 December 2015, during which 15 members of the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) abstained, despite instructions from the party. In response, the PAIGC decided to expel them and called for their replacement in the National Assembly. To that end, the Permanent Commission met on 15 January 2016 and declared the revocation of the terms of office the 15 members.

Today, these political differences, which had been confined to Parliament, have unleashed a true political and legal imbroglio. The Speaker of the National Assembly, on the one hand, and 3 of the 15 expelled members, on the other, have separately petitioned the Regional Court of Bissau to adjudicate the decision of the Permanent Commission to revoke the mandates of the aforementioned members of Parliament. On 8 February, the Court issued an interim order invalidating the suspension of the mandate revocation, contrary to its original decision, which ordered those same members to comply with the decision of the Permanent Commission of the National Assembly.

In that context, on 1 February the President of the Republic took the initiative of bringing together the different parties to the conflict to seek, through dialogue, a consensus outcome to the current political impasse in Parliament. He decided to invite to the presidential palace the Speaker of the National Assembly and representatives of the PAIGC, the Party for Social Renewal (PRS), the 15 Assembly members whose mandates had been revoked, and representatives of civil society for meetings that took place in the presence of representatives of the group of five international partners of Guinea-Bissau: the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Union and the United Nations. President Vaz shared the correspondence he had received concerning the current crisis, including that in which he had been asked to use his judicial influence to resolve the crisis. Each party presented its position and its underlying political and legal arguments.

On 2 February, the President convened a second meeting at which the parties reiterated their respective positions. On the one hand, the National Assembly and the PAIGC maintained that the members had been excluded legally; on the other, the 15 expelled members were supported by the PRS, which considered their exclusion to be illegal. Following the second round of discussions, on 4 February the leader of the PAIGC sent a letter to the President of the Republic, requesting that the format of the meetings be modified and arguing that

the dialogue should be conducted among institutions rather than individuals.

Consequently, neither the National Assembly nor the PAIGC have participated in subsequent meetings, including that of 10 February, which took place in the presence of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Special Envoy of the President of Nigeria, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste, Mr. Hernâni Coelho, who holds the rotating presidency of the CPLP, accompanied by Mr. Murade Murargy, Executive Secretary of that organization, in addition to representatives of the group of five international partners.

In the meantime, I went to Senegal and Guinea from 3 to 8 February to talk with the leaders of those two neighbouring States about recent political developments in Guinea-Bissau. During our meeting, President Macky Sall, Acting Chair of ECOWAS, expressed his concern about the current political stalemate and assured me that ECOWAS would continue to support the stabilization process in Guinea-Bissau. He stressed, however, the importance for the subregional organization of receiving financial assistance to maintain its military mission, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, beyond 30 June. President Alpha Condé, who is also ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, shared with me the same concerns as his Senegalese counterpart.

The more the institutions of the State and the principal political players are divided, the more the ongoing political situation will gain in complexity, thereby delaying the implementation of essential reforms. As the national stakeholders attempt to resolve their differences, and following the recent contradictory decisions of the Regional Court of Bissau, I again urgently appeal to them to attach all due importance and priority to frank and sincere dialogue, in strict compliance with the Constitution and the law. Any other formula outside these parameters will only perpetuate the cycle of political instability that has so long prevailed in the country.

Moreover, if it were to persist, this institutional stalemate would damage the people's chances of enjoying basic social services such as health care and education, condemning them to continue to pay the price for the failure of their political elite to keep their promises for a future better. I take this opportunity to congratulate the people of Guinea-Bissau on the role constructive they have played during this period difficult by demonstrating restraint and outstanding civic spirit.

I therefore reiterate my appeal to the political leaders to put the national interest above all individual or group considerations. It is time for these leaders to focus on seeking sustainable solutions instead of indulging in mutual accusations that do nothing to settle the crisis. For its part, the international community has repeatedly demonstrated its determination to help Guinea-Bissau to continue along the path of development and peace. I encourage it to pursue its activites on behalf of the country in an even more concerted and coordinated manner.

If the institutions of the Republic and key stakeholders were to agree on a road map or a stability pact, that could be a starting point for establishing conditions conducive to institutional stability, at least until the end of current legislature. This prerequisite is fundamental to the implementation of the "Terra Ranka" development programme, which was endorsed by international partners at the round table of Brussels, in March 2015, and enjoys significant approval among the people of Guinea-Bissau.

I therefore urge all stakeholders, especially the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and the political parties, to stick to the path of dialogue and to consider the possibility of adopting a stability pact in the interests of the nation. As the Secretary-General indicates in his latest report on Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations stands ready to support any initiative to strengthen stability in that country, provided that its leaders demonstrate the political will to commit themselves to that end.

Despite the progress made in strengthening domestic security, I remain concerned about the increase in organized crime in the country, due to the current crisis and the concommitent weakening of State institutions. The recent acts of armed robbery at the home of a member of the Government and the residence of a United Nations international staff member illustrate the deterioration of the environment security in Guinea-Bissau.

As members can see, the political situation in the country is worrisome, and maintaining United Nations commitment remains essential. I therefore reiterate the Secretary-General's request that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated

Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, which expires on 29 February, in order to allow the mission to maintain its activities and programmes to consolidate peace and the rule of law in Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Trovoada for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. De Aguiar Patriota.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Let me start by thanking you, Sir, for inviting me today and giving me the opportunity to address the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in the presence of Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), whose timely briefing is welcome and useful to the future deliberations and decisions of this Council.

The current political impasse in Guinea-Bissau is riddled with institutional challenges that continue to affect the lives of Bissau-Guineans while preventing them from reaping the fruits of progress and a better life. Since the last time I briefed the Council, on 28 August 2015 (see S/PV.7514, p. 3), the Peacebuilding Commission has remained actively engaged with the relevant stakeholders. We have issued three statements expressing support for finding a lasting solution to the crisis while signalling the responsibility of the political actors to swiftly step up their efforts to enable the country to move forward with its peacebuilding agenda.

I have personally engaged with a large number of key stakeholders, including the Department of Political Affairs in the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the leadership of UNIOGBIS and countries in the region. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Trovoada's ongoing efforts to exercise his good offices and to welcome the recent visit by Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Special Envoy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and representatives of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. We greatly value their cooperation with the PBC in working to link the peacebuilding agenda for Guinea-Bissau to the country's long-term priorities.

With regard to the situation unfolding before us, the PBC believes that the political class's failure to reach the consensus on decisive issues that could put Guinea-Bissau back on the path to stability has generated an unfortunate and prolonged period of uncertainty. It is equally disappointing and regrettable considering that the lack of conditions for stability in the country has forced international partners to delay the disbursement of the considerable financial resources pledged last March in Brussels at a donor conference for funding the national peacebuilding programme. It is disheartening that the momentum gained last year in the wake of the donor conference is losing steam, and the fact that disbursement has taken so long may only worsen the current situation in Guinea-Bissau.

However, amid the political turbulence, we continue to see reassuring signs, such as the fact that the divisions among politicians have not translated into violence in the streets or regions of the country. We would also like to highlight the stance of the armed forces and the independence of the justice system, both of which have been respecting and upholding the constitutional order, as well as the role of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in defusing potential flare-ups of violence during the tense times the country has been dealing with. In that regard, the PBC believes it is crucial that the Security Council endorse the continuation of the ECOWAS Mission beyond its mandate's expiration in June. I urge Council members and other countries to provide the political and financial support necessary for ECOMIB's extension. Our support for the people of Guinea-Bissau should emphasize these signs, as well as empowering civil society actors, especially women and young people, who are among those continuing to demand that their elected representatives be sensitive to their grievances and show civic responsibility.

The PBC is committed to working with the Council to support and strengthen the role of the United Nations and of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS, along with the mission's continued presence in Guinea-Bissau. Today more than ever, it is crucial to ensure a solid and effective United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau that coordinates and promotes the international community's efforts to assist the country and its authorities and people. We also encourage the efforts of regional actors such as the African Union and ECOWAS, which have been coherently articulating the urgent need to overcome the current impasse. Our joint efforts should continue to aim at preventing the political crisis from undermining the progress achieved so far.

Because the solutions to Guinea-Bissau's endemic problems must be initiated and carried out by the Bissau-Guineans themselves, the importance of national leadership and ownership as catalysts for political change cannot be overemphasized. Political will and constructive and consensual dialogue, coupled with courageous leadership, such as we know Bissau-Guineans are capable of, are needed more than ever, and should be transformed into a powerful force that can outweigh the actions of spoilers.

The seeds of economic and social growth have been sown in Guinea-Bissau by the Bissau-Guineans through their adoption of a long-term vision for peacebuilding and institutional reform. Their motivation is clear — to leave behind the dark days of widespread poverty and political instability. The popular cry in favour of a sovereign choice to return to democracy must not be ignored or silenced. It should be upheld, and we are therefore called on to act with determination. The international community has the important task of helping to make that vision become a reality. To achieve it, we must be coherent and consistent in our messages and deeds. It is therefore incumbent on the international partners to work together and remain engaged long after the end of the current crisis.

The difficulties in improving governance in Guinea-Bissau should not prevent the country from moving forward on key development opportunities. The PBC believes it is important to deliver consistent messages to the national authorities and stakeholders in which the emphasis is on confidence-building and on realizing the magnitude of the opportunity to move forward with reforms. The PBC would encourage the holding of a meeting of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau as an opportunity to deepen the dialogue and cooperation between the international community and the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

I would like to conclude by saying that the PBC considers it extremely important to develop and nurture its cooperation and relationship with the Council. We value the complementarity that the PBC and the Security Council can bring to addressing politically charged situations. In the specific context of Guinea-Bissau, we see an opportunity to apply joint positive leverage to find a solution to the current impasse and work towards an outcome that will benefit a country in dire need.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador De Patriota for his informative briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mrs. Pinto Lopes D'Alva (Guinea-Bissau): We would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your accession to the presidency of the Council for the month of February, and to wish you success in your work.

I would especially like to thank the Secretary-General for the report on Guinea-Bissau (S/2016/141) that has just been presented and for his personal engagement with the latest developments in my country. We very much appreciate and commend the work of his Special Representative, Mr. Miguel Trovoada, and his team. I would also like to thank Ambassadors Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil; Sofia Mesquita Borges, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste; and Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, the Chairs, respectively, of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for their statements and engagement on Guinea-Bissau.

Today's meeting of the Council is taking place at the time when Guinea-Bissau is facing a serious political crisis that is compromising the normal functioning of State institutions and jeopardizing all the gains achieved after the general elections of 2014, including the very encouraging results of the Brussels round-table donor conference. As we can see, the instability in Guinea-Bissau has not ended with its elections, and the situation the country is currently facing clearly illustrates that. That is why we are appealing to the international community to remain engaged with us in helping to strengthen our institutions and work much more closely with the national authorities and all political stakeholders in order to guide us, through open and frank dialogue, so as to mitigate the crisis situation that is endangering our peace and stability.

Despite of the tensions that exist within the Republic's major institutions and the country's main political parties, Bissau-Guineans throughout the country continue to behave relatively peacefully and calmly even as their socioeconomic well-being is being severely affected and their dreams and aspirations are once again on hold. We know that it is our primary responsibility to bring peace and stability to our country in order to achieve economic development and prosperity for all. But the long-suffering population does not deserve to pay a high price for the difficulties

encountered along the hard road to peace in Guinea-Bissau. They are counting on the international community to remain engaged and to not abandon Guinea-Bissau.

For Guinea-Bissau, the path to democracy has not been easy to traverse. However, we believe that the latest crisis, although more complicated in some ways and costly to our people, is bringing us much closer to the stable democracy we seek. The fact that all the parties involved in the current political crisis have been undertaking legal steps to resolve their differences through the national courts is to be highlighted and commended. We can say that these little democratic achievements are in part the result of a series of institutional reforms initiated by the Government. Notwithstanding all the reforms on its agenda, including public administration and justice, security sector reform still is one of the priorities for the Government, which is very engaged through the Ministry of Defence and its security sector reform steering committee, established for better follow-up and proper implementation of this important reform. In that vein, it is crucial that partners fulfil their commitment to Guinea-Bissau with regard to the reform process by providing their financial support to the pension fund for the demobilization of military and police officers, as well as by contributing financially to the special fund for retired former freedom fighters.

The position of the military during the latest crisis is to be commended, and the best way to ensure this attitude prevails is to complete the security sector reform to guarantee a smooth demobilization process and dignified retirement or return to civilian life. We are convinced that, with the effective implementation of all reforms in the country, Guinea-Bissau will be able to really achieve the needed peace and stability, which consequently would help to create an enabling environment to attract foreign and domestic investment, create jobs for youth, reinforce women's empowerment through more opportunities for decent jobs, and reduce poverty, leading to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for our people.

Allow me to commend before the Council the fact that, despite the current political situation in Guinea-Bissau, last week the Republic of Timor-Leste disbursed $250,000 for the national dialogue and reconciliation process, as part of their pledge at the Brussels round table conference last year. The gesture of honouring the commitment they made in Brussels should be followed by other friends and partners of Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, as it will soon be one year since the Brussels conference, the Government intends to hold a meeting in Bissau, in late March, to review its results and assess the best follow-up mechanisms for its implementation. Therefore, the fulfilment of the pledges made is very important to us.

The engagement of our regional and subregional partners, friends and the entire international community has been very helpful to peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau. That is why, in consultation with ECOWAS, the CPLP and the co-Chairs of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau, the Government wishes to have the next meeting of the group take place here in New York at the end March. The engagement of ECOWAS — through its Chair, the President of Senegal, our neighbour, and its Special Envoy, former President of Nigeria, as well as the President of Guinea — on bringing Guineans to dialogue is very much appreciated.

We commend the work that the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) has been doing in Guinea-Bissau, and welcome the renewal of its mandate. We appeal to all other partners of Guinea-Bissau to provide the financial support needed for ECOMIB to continue the important mission of ensuring peace and security in the country.

We welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), and hope that through the lessons learned from past mandates, the renewed mandate would bring new perspectives to better help Guinea-Bissau in its peacebuilding efforts. The Government of Guinea-Bissau supports the one-strong office of UNIOGBIS in Bissau, where all efforts and resources are centred on the purpose of helping peacebuilding efforts and bringing stability to the country.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the members of the Council and the entire international community for their continuous support to Guinea-Bissau.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mrs. Mesquita-Borges (Timor-Leste): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Sir, for assuming the rotating presidency for this month. I also thank you for convening this meeting. I also want to thank Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the

Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, for his briefing to the Council and for his strenuous efforts to assist the Bissau-Guinean authorities to resolve the crisis.

I am honoured to address the Council on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), whose members are Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe and my own country, Timor-Leste.

The CPLP member States regret the current political impasse and remain deeply concerned about the current situation in Guinea-Bissau. We call on all stakeholders — namely, the organs of sovereignty, the political parties, civil society and others — to engage in constructive, inclusive political dialogue, while respecting democratic principles and the Constitution. Statesmanship is required to move forward with both the national reform agenda and along the path to stability, which requires national leadership and ownership. In that connection, we highlight the fact that the constitutional order, as well as the role played by the judicial system, continue to be upheld in Guinea-Bissau. We also highlight the non-involvement of the armed forces. While it is the sole responsibility of the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to resolve the political crisis, it is crucial that the process fully respect the Constitution and the rule of law. The current impasse has impacted the reform agenda that has been initiated, in particular in the security and justice sectors, which have been stalled for over six months.

The national strategic development plan — entitled "Terra Ranka" — reflects the aspirations of the Bissau-Guineans for greater political stability and socioeconomic development, as well as for the consolidation of the rule of law and the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The document, presented by President José Mário Vaz and the former Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira at the donor round table in Brussels in March, garnered the support of the international partners. It is deeply concerning that the instability in the country has forced international partners to delay disbursements of pledges made in March. Such delays will only affect the people of Guinea-Bissau, who are already suffering a highly negative social and economic impact.

We call on the international community to continue supporting Guinea-Bissau and its people in the implementation of the State reforms and development plans, while stressing that the key responsibility for achieving the necessary stable environment for political and institutional cooperation rests with the national stakeholders. Last week, my country provided $250,000, as the first tranche of a pledge made during the Brussels round table, as part of an effort to support national reconciliation dialogue activities. Last July, Portugal also began the implementation of its strategic cooperation programme as follow-up to the €40 million pledge announced at the Brussels round table.

The CPLP wishes to recognize the concerted efforts of the international community to assist Guinea-Bissau in this crisis. In that regard, we appreciate and commend the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in particular those of Ambassador De Patriota as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC.

We also welcome the efforts made by regional leaders and by regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In particular, we thank ECOWAS for the important role played by the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) in maintaining peace and security in Guinea-Bissau. We also welcome the recent visit by the ECOWAS Special Envoy, His Excellency Mr. Obasanjo, and express appreciation for all his efforts. ECOMIB has played a critical role during this time of instability, and the CPLP expresses its full support for a possible extension of its mandate. We encourage donor countries and the Security Council to provide sufficient political and financial support for ECOMIB's work.

This indeed is a crucial moment for Guinea-Bissau. It is of the utmost importance that the international community stand by the country in consolidating the much-needed path to stability and development. The extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Bissau in its present format would definitely rightly express the United Nations commitment and engagement towards Guinea-Bissau and its people.

To conclude, we take this opportunity to highlight the recent visit made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste and current Chair of the Council of Ministers of the CPLP, His Excellency Mr. Hernâni Coelho, and the Executive Secretary of the CPLP, Ambassador Murargy, to Guinea-Bissau from 10 to 12 February. In that regard, we call for the early convening of the International Contact Group, in line with the call made by ECOWAS in December, in order to support the process of national dialogue towards

the consolidation of peace and democracy in Guinea-Bissau. We, the CPLP, remain ready to assist in the holding of the meeting in March, as just stated by the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

The CPLP stands ready, together with the rest of the international community, to continue our support to Guinea-Bissau in respect of national ownership.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7625

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7625th meeting

Wednesday, 17 February 2016, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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16-04077 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

I now give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to brief the Security Council once again on the latest developments in Yemen.

It has been two months since the parties met in Switzerland for the first face-to-face talks in the peace process. Those talks produced agreements on several measures, which have provided much-needed practical and moral support to the Yemeni people, including the delivery of humanitarian aid to the city of Ta'izz and the release of some prisoners.

The announcement of a cessation of hostilities on the first day of the talks was accompanied by the establishment of a ee-escalation and coordination committee aimed at strengthening adherence to the cessation of hostilities. There was also broad agreement on the principles of a general framework based on the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015). The talks served as the beginning of a process towards agreements on ending the war and Yemen's return to a peaceful political transition.

The parties left the last round of talks in a positive spirit, with practical proposals, recommendations and hope for a better future for Yemen and the Yemeni people. Tragically, the security situation in Yemen has deteriorated since the end of the talks. The latest United Nations reports indicate that more than 6,000 Yemenis have lost their lives since March 2015, and more than 35,000 have been injured.

Yemen is living through the most heartbreaking days in its history. Many parts of the country are again witnessing air strikes and extensive ground fighting. There has also been a significant increase in the number of missiles fired indiscriminately into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The escalation of military activities, along with the worsening of regional tensions, has created additional obstacles that threaten to delay a new round of talks.

There has been a notable upsurge in the number and magnitude of attacks carried out by terrorist groups in Aden, Lahej, Abyan, Shabwa and Sana'a. There have been attacks on Yemeni army checkpoints and residences of key security officials. The assassination of prominent political and security officials in the south of the country has continued unabated. On 28 January, an attack on the presidential palace in Aden resulted in the death of eight people, including civilian bystanders. Earlier today, a suicide bomber attacked a Yemeni army camp in Aden, reportedly killing at least 10 people.

I have repeatedly underlined the increasing presence of terrorist groups in Yemen. That creates a long-term threat for both the country and the region. The absence of the State in many parts of Yemen has facilitated the expansion of those terrorist groups. Al-Qaida and the Islamic State are present in many parts of Yemeni territory. There are reports of their growing influence in large areas of the governorate of Hadramout and their control of its port, maritime traffic and illegal oil trade. Reports of attacks on civilians, including stonings and executions of captured civilians and Yemeni army soldiers, are deeply worrying.

The basic freedoms of Yemenis, including the freedom of expression, continue to be undermined. There has been significant rise in the systematic persecution of civil society activists in Yemen, including reports of violent attacks and arbitrary detention of many journalists. Acts of intimidation, harassment and disappearances of journalists are a clear violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Yemenis continue to face grave violations of international humanitarian law. Respect for human rights and international humanitarian law is critical to the ability of Yemenis to survive the current crisis with

dignity and safety. The agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations are doing their utmost to uphold the rights of Yemenis and provide much-needed assistance. It is important that all United Nations staff be able to work in safety and without restriction. I call on the Government of Yemen and all other stakeholders to uphold those principles and to respect and support the work of the United Nations and its agencies.

I have been engaged in intensive consultations with Yemeni leaders and regional partners in recent weeks. I discussed the challenges facing the peace process with the Foreign Ministers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, France and with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan and the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, all of whom underlined their continued support for an end to violence in Yemen and a political settlement. I met with Yemeni Vice-President and Prime Minister Khaled Bahah on 8 and 16 January, in addition to holding repeated meetings with representatives of the Yemeni Government, other Yemeni leaders and civil society members. I also travelled to Sana'a, where I met with senior officials from the Houthis and the General People's Congress, as well as key political parties and women's and youth groups.

During the latest round of consultations, I sought to ensure that some of the positive commitments that emerged from the talks in Switzerland were implemented. While far from a comprehensive settlement, those commitments yield tangible benefits for the Yemeni people and bolster the peace process.

I worked for the release of two Saudi nationals by the Houthis on 14 January, after almost 10 months in captivity. That was welcomed by the Secretary-General and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. That positive development was soon followed by the release of the Yemeni Minister of Technical and Vocational Education, Abdulrazzak Al-Ashwal, and four Yemeni political and media activists. I shall continue to press for, and work towards, the release of others detainees.

Building on the commitments made in Switzerland, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations expanded the delivery of assistance to Ta'izz, including to areas that had been cut off for many months. The World Health Organization, the World Food Programme and Médecins Sans Frontières have all been able to deliver critically needed assistance to Ta'izz in recent weeks. I hope that that city and other areas that have suffered tremendously in recent months will continue to receive assistance on a regular basis. I repeat my call to all parties to ensure that humanitarian agencies have free and unhindered access to all parts of Yemen.

I have also pursued agreements that seek to preserve the functioning of key State institutions on which the Yemeni people depend. Preserving their functioning helps current service delivery and will also facilitate a faster and more effective recovery following an agreement. The Central Bank's Board of Directors met recently in Amman, with the participation of the Yemeni Minister of Finance and the Sana'a-based Central Bank Governor. Together with the Resident Coordinator, UNICEF and the World Bank, I am working to relaunch Yemen's Social Welfare Fund, which will provide critical financial support for the poorest of Yemen's people.

Those are some positive measures that demonstrate a willingness to cooperate in order to preserve the viability and effectiveness of key State institutions in advance of a settlement. The implementation of those measures will require continued political support from all parties, as well as generous support from donors to replenish the various funds and mechanisms, so as to contribute to the stability of the Yemeni economy. The conflict is causing grave damage to the capacity of Yemen's public and private sectors. Both are critical for Yemen's future economic prospects and the ability of people to survive under the present circumstances. Humanitarian aid is critical, yet limited in its reach. Many Yemenis continue to rely on private-sector economic activity. For that reason, the extensive damage to private-sector infrastructure is of great concern.

In spite of the collapse of the cessation of hostilities, the de-escalation and coordination committee has continued to function, with constructive participation by all sides. The parties have committed to strengthen the capacity of the committee and to agree on a precise location for its meetings. The work of the de-escalation and coordination committee is essential in order to ensure the success of the cessation of hostilities in the future.

Despite those areas of limited progress, deep divisions persist that prevent me from calling for the next round of talks. The parties remain divided over whether a new round of talks should be convened with or without a new cessation of hostilities. Unfortunately,

I have not received sufficient assurances that a new cessation of hostilities, should I call for one, would be respected. As the Secretary-General has stated repeatedly, there is no military solution to this conflict. Recommitment to a cessation of hostilities leading to a permanent ceasefire is the practical expression of this truth. I urge the Security Council to support that step and take action towards its implementation as soon as possible.

Yemen has suffered greatly. Its people have witnessed unspeakable tragedies. The country's infrastructure has been destroyed. Families have been dispersed. The social fabric is torn apart. This is a critical and most difficult phase. With every passing day, more and more Yemeni lives are lost. A new cessation of hostilities will open the way for new talks and an agreement on Yemen's return to a peaceful and orderly transition. I shall continue to work with all sides in Yemen, the region and the international community to build consensus on the key elements of such future agreements. The conflict in Yemen is political, so the solution must also be political. Only an inclusive peace process will ensure a future of reconciliation and peace in the country.

The Yemeni people have shown a spirit of compromise in the interest of preserving the unity of their country many times in the past. We must collectively help Yemen regain that spirit of compromise. That is the only way Yemenis will be be able to overcome the current violence and build a peace process that can bring together all of Yemen's diverse communities and allow them to jointly and peacefully look to their future and the future of their country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I now call on Ambassador Yoshikawa, Permanent Representative of Japan, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): Pursuant to sub-paragraph 19 (e) of resolution 2140 (2014), I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established pursuant to that resolution. My text will be circulated to the members.

This is my first briefing to the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Committee. My predecessor, Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaitė, last briefed the Council on 23 October 2015 (see S/PV.7542). I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for her excellent work as a Chair of the Committee.

The Committee's Panel of Experts submitted its final report (see S/2016/73) to the Committee on 11 January and briefed the Committee on its main findings and recommendations on 22 January. In accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2204 (2015), the Panel submitted its report to the Council on 22 January, which was published on 26 January.

My briefing today comes shortly before the Council is scheduled to vote on a new draft resolution renewing the assets freeze and tavel ban measures, as well as the mandate of the Panel of Experts. The new draft resolution presents Council members with an opportunity to refine, and offer additional guidance on, the implementation of the targeted sanctions measures, particularly the targeted arms embargo. While there are different views regarding the sanctions instrument, the Council is unanimous in its calls for a political solution to the crisis and for support for the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. With that in mind, I would like to reiterate that sanctions are an important tool available to the Security Council for preventive, as opposed to punitive, purposes, and that the Council should be guided by Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter of the United Nations when considering sanctions. Sanctions are not an end in themselves, and they should be leveraged to support the political process, which should be Yemen-led and brokered by the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the importance of the full implementation by Member States of all sanctions measures imposed by resolutions 2140 (2014), 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015), as well as the need for the relevant reporting obligations to be upheld. I would like to encourage the cooperation of all Member States with the Panel of Experts, including by providing the Panel with requested information in a timely manner and by facilitating its visits.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Yoshikawa for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7626

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7626th meeting
Thursday, 18 February 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea

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16-04256 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Briefing by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009).

I am honoured to have convened today's Security Council briefing on the activities of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee. My statement today will focus on recent developments and the latest findings of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group. Today's briefing is being conducted in accordance with sub-paragraph 11 (g) of resolution 1844 (2008).

With respect to the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, since the beginning of this year, the Committee has received one notification under paragraph 10 (g) of resolution 2111 (2013). The Committee has also received two notifications in accordance with paragraph 11 (a) of resolution 2011 (2013).

At its informal consultations on 9 October 2015, the Committee reviewed the final reports of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, and discussed their recommendations. The Monitoring Group reported that international interest in the rich marine resources and minerals of Somalia had grown. That interest, however, had not yet been accompanied by adequate efforts to manage these resources. The Monitoring Group considered that this constituted a potential threat to peace, security and stability in Somalia. With respect to the mineral resources sector in Somalia, the Monitoring Group said that tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and regional administrations were on the rise as both continued to sign agreements with international oil and gas companies.

With regard to the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to Somalia and the region, the Group reported that it persisted despite the fact that several of its leaders had been killed. Al-Shabaab took advantage of the fact that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Somali National Army and allied forces are at the limit of their capacities, making their bases increasingly vulnerable to possible attacks. The Monitoring Group also found that Al-Shabaab is seeking to maintain communications with Yemen and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. The Monitoring Group reported that the Federal Government of Somalia and provisional regional administrations had trouble controlling the territories liberated from Al-Shabaab, which has led to the resurgence of tensions and conflicts among communities.

With regard to humanitarian access, the Monitoring Group reported that it remained extremely fragile, especially in areas where Al-Shabaab had established blockades of humanitarian supplies and trade by arresting and killing civilians and destroying their property. Foreign and domestic forces active in Somalia continued to attack civilians, either as a deliberate tactic of war or through the disproportionate use of force.

With respect to charcoal, the Monitoring Group reported that the implementation of its ban had improved since Al-Shabaab was displaced from locations where it is shipped for export. However, because the use of forged documents is widespread among carriers, Somali charcoal continued to be exported. In that regard, the Monitoring Group suggested that the Somali authorities, Member States, AMISOM and troop-contributing countries seek to better coordinate their efforts to ensure the existence of a comprehensive and efficient mechanism against the illegal trade in Somali charcoal.

The Monitoring Group noted the substantive progress made by the Federal Government with regard to the quality and timeliness of its notifications to the Committee concerning imported weapons. At the same time, the Group expressed concern about the lack of precision of the information provided on the composition and arrangement of the security forces. In this regard, the Committee decided to address a note verbale to all Member States, asking them to support the comprehensive security sector reform programme

announced by the Office of the President of the Federal Government of Somalia on 9 September 2015, in order to ensure the timely delivery of technical and financial assistance to the security sector.

Let me now turn to the Monitoring Group's report on Eritrea. The Group found no evidence that the Government of Eritrea had provided support to Al-Shabaab. However, it reported that Eritrea was supporting armed groups in Ethiopia, in contravention of paragraph 16 of resolution 1907 (2009). The Group reported that it had spoken with the Eritrean Government on several occasions, but that the authorities of that country had shown little willingness to cooperate. The Group also noted the lack of progress in resolving the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. The Committee hopes that the Qatari mediation efforts will contribute to resolving this matter.

The outbreak of the crisis in Yemen was a new development. The Group received unconfirmed reports of the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen, fighting alongside the Arab coalition. If these reports are confirmed, the Group has said that this participation could constitute a violation of paragraph 6 of the same resolution. After the Council adopted resolution 2244 (2015), the Secretary-General appointed to the Monitoring Group eight experts knowledgeable in weapons, armed groups, finance, humanitarian affairs, maritime affairs and transportation, natural resources and regional issues.

Between 11 and 15 January, eight experts of the Monitoring Group, visiting New York to participate in an orientation programme and the planning of its mandate, held bilateral meetings with key delegations, including myself as Chairman of the Sanctions Committee on Somalia and Eritrea, as well as the Permanent Representative of Eritrea. In the first update in writing that the Committee received this year, the Monitoring Group stated that it continued to work with the diplomatic community, the United Nations system in Nairobi and key stakeholders in the Horn of Africa in order to actively identify new areas of research and to expand the network of contacts in order to fulfil its new mandate. It is expected that, on 22 April, the coordinator of the Monitoring Group shall provide the Committee with the mid-term update on the Group's investigations and activities that the Council has requested with a view to having the final report ready on 15 October 2016.

The Committee is currently considering a draft guidance note for implementing resolutions in order to provide guidance and operational recommendations to Member States, the Somali Government and other relevant institutions to implement the measures of the arms embargo more efficiently. The draft guidance note summarizes existing restrictions imposed by the arms embargo on Somalia and Eritrea, describes exemptions to the measures, and clarifies problems that have been encountered by Member States and the Somali Government, in particular in applying the arms embargo. The Committee is expected to approve the draft guidance note and make it public in early March. The Committee has expressed its interest in assessing the changes in the security situation in the Horn of Africa with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the current sanctions regime in Somalia and Eritrea.

Finally, I would like to thank Council members for entrusting me again with the chairmanship of this important Committee. I will continue doing everything in my power to guide the work of the Committee in a balanced and fair manner. I am confident that, through its work, the Committee will make a significant contribution to the Council's efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Somalia, Eritrea and the Horn of Africa.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I thank you, Sir, for convening this briefing. It is well timed, following our discussion of sanctions last week.

As this is our first opportunity to do so in the Chamber, I should like to begin by expressing my condolences and those of the United Kingdom to the family of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali and to our Egyptian colleagues following the death of the former Secretary-General on Tuesday. He was an influential leader of the United Nations, presiding over the Organization during one of its most challenging times.

One such challenge was, of course, Somalia. He was tireless in his efforts to bring peace and stability to that war-torn country, both by convening the ceasefire talks in 1992 and through the subsequent deployments of the United Nations Operation in Somalia. I am sure he would have been heartened by the great progress made in that country over recent years.

If we are to sustain that progress in Somalia this year, the continued engagement of the Council will be vital. The elections in the autumn are a crucial litmus test for the welcome developments over the past four years. But, as the attempted bombing of the Somali airliner this month showed, real challenges remain. The Council needs to be as attentive as ever. The work of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group is a vital tool. The Group is essential to keeping the Council informed about what is happening on the ground. Let me set out two ways to achieve that this year.

First, it is a sad inevitability that there will be some individuals and entities inside and outside the Government and political institutions who will seek to spoil the political process to serve their own ends. This is exactly the sort of information the Monitoring Group needs to bring to our attention. We then need to show that, as a Council, we are prepared to act. The Somali people deserve a transparent and representative Government. We owe it to them to help make this a reality.

Secondly, turning to the military side, we must not underestimate Al-Shabaab. They are down, but they are far from out, which means that it is more important than ever for Somalia to develop a credible and effective security force that can tackle the threat it faces. Again, the Monitoring Group has a key role to play by ensuring that the Somali Government is fulfilling the terms of the arms embargo suspension. This must include the Government marking, registering and storing weapons properly, and taking steps to build a truly national army, rather than a series of regional militia.

It is important to underline the need for a frank and constructive relationship between the Monitoring Group and the Government of Somalia. This has improved in recent years. Inevitably, with elections approaching, the political temperature will increase. It is imperative in the months ahead that the relationship remain constructive, even if both parties do not agree. The maturity with which the Government of Somalia approaches its relationship with the Monitoring Group will be an important indicator of how far the country has moved in recent years.

Sadly, Eritrea's relationship with the Monitoring Group is not nearly as constructive. In fact, it remains unacceptable. The Group has a Chapter VII mandate from the Council. As we heard so clearly in the open debate on Monday (S/PV.7621), the powers invested by the Charter through Chapter VII are not to be taken lightly, and certainly not to be ignored. Eritrea must cooperate with the Group and admit it into Eritrea. It is frankly outrageous that this has not happened for the past three years. So the ball is in Eritrea's court. It can admit the Monitoring Group, have a constructive relationship with the Group and allow the Council to have an informed debate on the propriety of sanctions, or it can continue to choose isolation, with all that entails. I hope that, with a new Monitoring Group now in place, Eritrea will see cooperation as the correct response.

In Somalia and Eritrea, we see two contrasting responses to wholly legitimate requests from the Council. On the one side, engagement with the Monitoring Group has supported progress that was once thought unimaginable. On the other, continued stalling and inaction have left Eritrea in isolation. In discussing both countries today in open session, I hope we can bring renewed focus to that contrast and encourage Eritrea to change its approach. As we do so, it is imperative that we give our full support to the work of the Monitoring Group. They need it in the year ahead.

Mr. Okamura (Japan): As this is the first meeting on the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, my delegation would like to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your work as Chair of that Committee. Let me also commend the work carried out by the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group.

For Somalia, this is a crucial year for the implementation of Vision 2016. Japan welcomes the recent inclusive Somali-led discussion on an electoral model, and the decision announced by the Federal Government of Somalia at the end of January. It is now important for all parties of Somalia to set aside their remaining differences, engage constructively in the political process without delay, and agree on the details so that this decision may be implemented in time for the elections to be carried out by September. In that connection, proper management of public finances in the run-up to the elections is crucial. We must not allow spoiler networks to manipulate the course of events through financial bribes or threats. The Security Council should be ready, if necessary, to consider listing individuals engaged in any acts that threaten the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia for targeted measures.

Al-Shabaab remains a major threat. Japan strongly condemns the terrorist attacks that took place recently, and we express our sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the victims and their families. We pay tribute to the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army for their work under harsh conditions on the ground. In order to prevent Al-Shabaab from taking further advantage, we believe that it is crucial that offensive operations against Al-Shabaab by AMISOM, the Somali National Army and the police be carried out in an even more closely coordinated manner. We look forward to the troop-contributing country summit and the High-level Partnership Forum in Istanbul next week for concrete results in that direction.

After long endeavours, Somalia is at last moving steadily towards State-building. This must be Somali-led, but at the same time supported by the international community. It is my pleasure to announce that Japan has recently provided additional assistance of $37.1 million, which we expect to be used for State-building measures in Somalia, such as supporting the election process and police training. Japan is a strong supporter of the Monitoring Group.

It is unfortunate that the Monitoring Group has not been able to visit Eritrea since February 2011. I would like to recall that all Member States are under the obligation to act in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to cooperate with the Monitoring Group so that this important body can carry out its mandated tasks fully and effectively. To that end, we hope to see the new experts of the Monitoring Group and Government of Eritrea both engaging in a cooperative and constructive manner this year, with the support of the Sanctions Committee and the Council.

Japan stands ready to provide every support as we continue our work in the sanctions committee under your chairmanship.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my thanks to the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, the Permanent Representative of Venezuela, for his efforts.

We highly value the efforts made by the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group as well. The sanctions regime against Somalia and Eritrea is one of the oldest regimes imposed by the Council. It clearly demonstrates the necessity for the Council to accord adequate importance to the working methods of subsidiary organs of the Security Council. That should be done in order to develop those working methods, modernize the sanctions regime for further effectiveness and impact, and attain the political objectives we all seek. I therefore affirm what I said at the open debate in the Security Council on 11 February (see S/PV. 7620).

The recent developments in Somalia show how important it is for the Council and for all international and regional parties to work to use the momentum, realize an effective political reconciliation, re-establish the State and confront the security threats posed by the Al-Shabaab movement. We call upon all States to do the necessary work and provide all necessary support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in order to guarantee the Mission's success in fulfilling its mandate. We also call upon States to accord greater importance and provide further material assistance to the Somali Government in order to build the capacity of the Somali forces. This is the only way to reach the desired result; it is a cornerstone for all efforts to restore peace and security in the country.

We express our concern with regard to the continued threats to relief organizations and the obstruction of delivery of humanitarian assistance to civilians, as well as the continued exportation of charcoal from many Somali ports. We call on the Somali Government, AMISOM and all international parties to provide the necessary protection for humanitarian efforts and guarantee that the international embargo on charcoal exports is respected.

We reiterate the importance of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of sanctions regime on Somalia and Eritrea in a manner that is commensurate with peace efforts and which does not have a negative impact on international efforts to counter terrorism in the southern Red Sea region and in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your briefing on the work of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. My delegation welcomes your able leadership of that Committee. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the members of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group on their appointment pursuant to resolution 2245 (2015).

Malaysia welcomes the Monitoring Group's active pursuit of its mandate, including through its

engagement with a wide range of interlocutors, its visits to third countries and its site visits in Somalia. However, it is regrettable to note that the group was not granted access into Eritrea during the reporting period. Access of the group to Eritrea would provide an important opportunity for the Government to engage constructively with the international community, with a view to achieving better understanding of the outstanding issues and questions, as well as in addressing possible concerns. We urge Eritrea to consider positively enhancing its cooperation with the Committee and the Group in line with its obligations under the relevant Council resolutions.

Somalia has undergone tremendous changes over the years. In the past few years, we have seen significant positive momentum in the critical aspects of the political dialogue and State- and institution-building processes. Such momentum has resulted in modest yet tangible gains, including in the areas of peace and security and the socioeconomic development of the country. Mindful that 2016 is a particularly important year for Somalia, it is important for the positive momentum to be maintained.

In this regard, Malaysia welcomes the recent announcements by the Federal Government of Somalia on the electoral model for 2016. The Federal Government should continue to work closely and cooperatively with the existing and emerging regional administrations in a transparent and inclusive manner so as to ensure buy-in and cement support for the model and the ensuing process. This would be a crucial step towards a successful political transition. In this regard, it is equally important that differences between the federal and regional authorities on the issue of exploitation of mineral resources be managed in a constructive and equitable manner.

On a separate note, Malaysia echoes concerns expressed on the humanitarian situation in Somalia, particularly in areas where there is ongoing fighting against Al-Shabaab and where intercommunal tensions and conflicts have re-emerged. We note that in 2015 alone, at least 157 incidents of grave violations against children were documented. In its ongoing effort to improve the overall peace and security situation in the country, we urge the Government to continue implementing its action plan on children and armed conflict.

It is important to continue focusing on the threat posed by terrorist groups in Somalia, particularly Al-Shabaab. Malaysia fully concurs with the view that pressure must continue to be exerted on that group, its supporters and affiliates. We greatly value and respect the sacrifices made by all security sector actors in Somalia, most notably by the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somalia security forces in countering this threat. Such threats can only be effectively neutralized through a comprehensive strategy.

In this regard, the finalization of the national security policy and a national defence act as well as the integration of regional forces into the Somali National Army are positive developments, which contribute to enhancing its ability to combat Al-Shabaab. At the same time, we note that the respective presences of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula are seeping into Somalia and the Horn of Africa. As rightly highlighted in the President's briefing, this worrying development is one of the factors changing the security situation in the country.

With regard to the Council's work on this issue, it may be useful to consider convening a joint meeting between the 751/1907 Committee and the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. The purpose could be, inter alia, to explore possible synergies in the work of both Committees, including examining how the existing sanctions regimes could be better focused on terrorists, their supporters and affiliates, which all threaten to undermine the positive gains made in Somalia, and perhaps more generally in assessing and addressing the threat posed to the Horn of Africa.

With regard to the implementation of the charcoal ban, Malaysia supports the recommendations for better coordination between the combined maritime forces and the Federal Government of Somalia in curbing the illegal trade in Somali charcoal. The Monitoring Group could play a bridging role, including through the sharing of information in this regard.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's commitment to working closely with the 751/1907 Committee and its Chair, the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, all Council members, partners and stakeholders in contributing to our collective effort in assisting Somalia, in the maintenance of peace and

security and in securing stability in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): We very much welcome this open briefing, which we believe increases transparency and helps implementation. The Somalia sanctions regime has transformed over its long history since the 1990s, and it now fulfils an important role in supporting Somali State-building goals.

As we said in last week's debate (see S/PV. 7620), sanctions are not imposed in isolation. The sanctions regime can assist in achieving the political, security and humanitarian goals in Somalia, namely completing Vision 2016, accelerating the fight against Al-Shabaab and addressing Somalia's humanitarian needs. When the Council discusses Somalia in 2016, in what is a precarious year for the country, we must include discussion of sanctions, and we must take into account the valuable information contained in the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group's reports.

One important example is in the area of natural resources. Generous maritime and mineral wealth present a great opportunity for Somalia, but they also present a possible driver of conflict, in the absence of an effective regulatory framework. This risk is exacerbated during the federalism process. The Council will need to remain alert to how it can support Somalia in its stewardship of its natural resources, drawing on the expertise of the Monitoring Group, the United Nations presence on the ground, and partners. That role includes support for governance of natural resources, but also extends to assisting Somalia in channelling its natural resource wealth into State-building and other key issues, for example, ensuring full and regular payment to soldiers in the Somali National Army.

Resolution 2244 (2015), adopted last year, touched on illegal fishing. That issue remains of concern and we are ready to support the Federal Government's efforts to establish and enforce an appropriate legal regime as contemplated by the resolution. Security sector reform efforts and depriving Al-Shabaab of financing are also priorities.

The Somalia sanctions regime must be implemented by Somalia and other States Members of the United Nations, including its neighbours. But to be truly effective a range of other actors also have important roles to play, including the African Union Mission in Somalia and multinational partnerships like the Combined Maritime Forces. Continued outreach by the Committee and the Monitoring Group with those partners is needed to ensure that sanctions are fully implemented. An example of that is the progress made on avoiding technical breaches of the arms embargo through more consistent advance notifications of imports under the arms embargo. We also welcome the Committee's recent initiative to develop an implementation assistance notice on arms. That is a practical initiative that has the potential to be very useful in clarifying obligations, particularly for those Member States not on the Council.

Finally, on Eritrea, we are hopeful that 2016 could be a positive year for engagement with the Committee and the Monitoring Group. We believe a visit to the region by the Committee — something that was discussed last year — would be a helpful step. We are ready to support such efforts.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, which you, Sir, chair.

We are worried about the recent intensification in the various terrorist tactics of Al-Shabaab throughout large parts of Somalia, including Mogadishu, and the trend of strengthening the group's ties with Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Despite the fact that the forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) now control 80 per cent of the Somali territory, large-scale terrorist attacks committed by Al-Shabaab since the beginning of the year clearly demonstrate that extremists are still in a position to seriously destabilize the situation.

Those factors, together with the potentially negative consequences of the conflict in Yemen, demonstrate the need to continue the military pressure on the Islamists, based on the efforts of Somali authorities, to stabilize the liberated areas and establish viable local governance there. It seems that there is a need for further international support for African peacekeepers and the Somali National Army, including along the lines of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), as well as in line with the coordination and advisory role played by the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM. We look forward to the successful implementation of the obligations set out in resolution 2245 (2015), which expanded the mandate of UNSOS.

We support the idea of strengthening the police contingent of AMISOM and adapting the activities of UNSOS to the task of increasing of the effectiveness of its operations. In the future, we must increase the provision of equipment and technical support in line with Security Council decisions. In that context, we welcome the adoption of a law on combating money laundering and terrorist financing by the country's Parliament on 26 December 2015.

We call for a strengthening of the sanctions regime with respect to Somalia, including strict adherence to the arms and charcoal embargo, as well as monitoring of the coastal waters of Somalia and assistance from AMISOM in that area, in line with resolution 2244 (2015). We think that the embargo on arms and charcoal from Somalia are key instruments for preventing the fuelling of extremist forces in the country. We have seen the effectiveness of a partial lifting of the embargo in the provision of arms to the Somali armed forces.

The restrictions with respect to Eritrea reveal a totally different picture. We are pleased to note that the Monitoring Group has found no evidence that the Eritrean Government is supporting the Al-Shabaab armed group. No convincing data have yet been provided to indicate that country is conducting subversive activities. In that regard, we think attempts to increase pressure on Asmara are counterproductive. Once again, we call upon the Monitoring Group to use only verified information in its reports.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this briefing. We would like to thank the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea, which you, Sir, preside over, for the excellent report you presented. We assure you, Sir, of our full support.

At the outset, I would like to convey to the Egyptian delegation the sympathy and heartfelt condolences of the Senegalese delation on the death of His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a well-known Egyptian of Africa and the Arab world, who was an excellent Secretary-General of the United Nations. Thanks to his talent, rigour, vision and, above all, commitment, he made a significant contribution to the development of multilateralism, including in the Chamber in which we are gathered today.

My delegation would also like to thank the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for its high-quality report (see S/2015/802) and encourage it to continue to work in collaboration with the entire international community, United Nations agencies in Kenya and all stakeholders in the region to ensure the full implementation of its mandate. With regard to Somalia, I wish every success to the meeting of partners to be held next week in Istanbul.

My country continues to be concerned about the differences between the Federal Government and the regional administrations with regard to the management of the mining resources of the country, which are subject to the growing covetousness of international companies, and with regional administrations tending to sign contracts directly with those companies. In that regard, Senegal condemns the ongoing violations of the ban on the export of charcoal from Somalia, even though there has been a slight lull in those activities since the withdrawal of Al-Shabaab from the export sites. In that regard, my delegation calls for better coordination of the efforts among the Federal Government, the federal member states, international organizations and the forces on the ground to create a viable and effective mechanism to combat illicit trafficking in Somali charcoal.

My delegation reiterates the need to uphold the charcoal ban and fully implement resolution 2195 (2014), on the links between transnational organized crime and terrorism. Cooperation should also be bolstered to prevent Al-Shabaab militias from financing their activities through trafficking in charcoal. Senegal would like to encourage the ongoing efforts deployed by maritime forces to fight against the illicit trafficking in natural resources and the cooperation of those forces with the Monitoring Group.

On the security front, Senegal remains deeply worried by the ongoing threat of Al-Shabaab throughout Somalia, including in the liberated areas. My delegation is also concerned about intercommunal tensions and the growing entrenchment of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the region. Facing these ongoing threats, my delegation is pleased to note the cooperation of the Monitoring Group with the Federal Government on notification to the Committee of imported weapons, and appeals for the arms embargo in Somalia and Eritrea to be upheld. Along the same lines, my delegation encourages the finalization of an implementation assistance noticee to provide guidelines

and operational recommendations to Member States, the Somali Government and other relevant entities for the full implementation of the arms embargo.

As you stressed in your briefing, Sir, Senegal invites Member States to carefully consider the letter dated 9 September 2015, in which the President of the Somali Federal Government requested support for rapid financing and technical assistance for the security sector. Regarding attacks on humanitarian personnel, the diversion of assistance and impediments to its delivery, my delegation firmly condemns all such attacks, whoever the perpetrators may be.

Senegal reiterates its support for the people and the Government of Somalia in the electoral consultations to take place in 2016, in particular with respect to women's representation at a level of 30 per cent in the two parliamentary chambers.

Regarding Eritrea, we note that the Monitoring Group found no proof that the Eritrean Government is supporting Al-Shabaab. Regarding allegations that the Government alledgedly supports armed groups in Ethiopia, in violation of paragraph 16 of resolution 1907 (2009), the Monitoring Group could give us further information with a view to promoting transparency. We also call on the Eritrean authorities to cooperate more fully with the Monitoring Group. My country alsonoted that the report of the Monitoring Group indicates the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen, who are alledgedly fighting on behalf of the Arab coalition. That raises legitimate questions for Senegal. We would like further clarification of that situation.

Finally, we regret the lack of progress in resolving border disputes between Djibouti and Eritrea.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): France, like others, pays tribute to former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was a great leader both of the United Nations and la francophonie. His passing fills us with sorrow, and we extend our condolences to his bereaved friends and family.

I thank the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I wish to make three points.

On the political front, we welcome progress made with the adoption of the Mogadishu Declaration of 16 December, as well as the agreement on the electoral model for 2016. As underscored by the Group of Experts, these agreements are tenuous. The electoral reform has not been concluded. In many provinces, local and political rivalries impede discussions on the federal model. The recent fighting that bloodied the city of Galkayo demonstrates the fragile nature of progress in the protection of civilians and national reconciliation. We must remain vigilant and continue to work with the Somali authorities for the implementation of these agreements and the ongoing commitment of all in stabilizing Somalia.

On the military front, we welcome the courage and commitment of the soldiers of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces leading the fight against Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is on the decline, economic activity is increasing, and these are encouraging signs. However, that terrorist group is far from being vanquished. We pay tribute to AMISOM soldiers and Somali citizens who lost their lives in the latest attacks. It is worrisome to read that, in certain places, Al-Shabaab is enjoying the support of local populations in launching its attacks. Our shared goal is to continue relentlessly the fight against that terrorist group, but military action is not enough. As it is the world over, hearts must be won to rally people on behalf of stabilization and reconstruction projects for Somalia, rather than the morbid objectives sought by Al-Shabaab.

Thirdly, I wish to make a few comments on sanctions, because the sanctions regime is a decisive tool in supporting the political process and the fight against Al-Shabaab. The work of the Monitoring Group is decisive in that respect. Threats to the fragile process in Somalia are genuine. There are many who are interested in perpetuating war. They need to be identified and punished. Al-Shabaab and certain other individuals continue to finance their own activities through various types of trafficking, helping to destroy the country a little more every day and diverting financial resources to their own profit. These flows and this traffic must be identified and halted. Arms trafficking is, of course, a major factor of destabilization. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the arms embargo and of the need to ensure its scrupulous implementation, as well as the important role of the Somali Government in following up the flow of weapons.

On all of these points — and this is hardly a comprehensive list — France welcomes the high-quality work undertaken by the Monitoring Group and encourages it to continue along this path.

I wish to say a final word on Eritrea. We note the fact that the Monitoring Group found no evidence that Eritrea is participating in the financing or support of armed groups in the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, we believe that conditions have not yet been met for the lifting of sanctions, as requested by the authorities of Asmara. We await frank and sincere cooperation on their part with the sanctions committees, particularly on the matter of Djibouti prisoners. This is the first stage of a gradual evolution of the sanctions regime. We do not understand what the Government in Asmara has to hide or what is stopping it from fully cooperating with the Monitoring Group.

The international community, the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union have invested much for peace and stability in Somalia. The action of the Sanctions Committee and the Monitoring Group is a game changer, and France guarantee its full support as they continue their work.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for your briefing and chairmanship of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea. It is abundantly clear that the Council needs to remain diligent and focused on supporting Somali efforts to advance a stable, prosperous future with fair and transparent governance, establishing a Government that is accountable to the people and has the capacity to ensure that the country's natural resources are harnessed for the benefit of all Somalis, and not misappropriated by thieves or used to fund terror.

We would like to thank the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group for its efforts to oversee the implementation of these important sanctions and to keep the Council and the Sanctions Committee informed on a range of issues, including countering Al-Shabaab, piracy, corruption and violations of human rights. These sanctions have limited the illict flow of charcoal, depriving the terrorist group Al-Shabaab of revenue, and the Committee, with the support of the Monitoring Group, has helped us understand and maintain focus on the corruption that undermines efforts to build strong institutions in Somalia.

Peace will neither emerge nor be sustainable in Somalia until Somalis create a professional security sector, and we are commited to doing everything we can to facilitate security assistance to achieve that goal. However, the Government of Somalia must do its part by accurately reporting on the composition and disposition of its security forces. Without that reporting, we lack the most basic information to judge whether arms or related materiel supplied to strengthen Somalia's security sector will be safeguarded from diversion. Al-Shabaab still constitutes a serious threat to Somalia's peace and we remain committed to ensuring that this terrorist group is defeated. Cutting off Al-Shabaab's sources of financial support is central to that effort and a key to bringing about stability in Somalia.

The Committee, with the support of the Monitoring Group, should continue to expose and crack down on the illicit charcoal trade. The Committee should continue to engage directly with countries that may be receiving such charcoal, and Member States should remain vigilant and cooperative and actively share information, including information on vessels carrying charcoal, shipping documents, data on importers and anything else that can help in order to robustly and better enforce the ban. By imposing the charcoal ban, the Security Council came together to take firm, effective action to break the linkage between natural-resource trafficking and threats to stability in Somalia. Where we encounter this nexus, the Security Council should act. We should not shy away from addressing drivers of conflict in Somalia or elsewhere. We encourage the Committee and the Council to look broadly at how to prevent the diversion of Somalia's natural wealth to terrorists, corrupt officials and others who would undermine peace.

Related to that, we commend the commitment of the Combined Maritime Forces to helping track illicit exports. The Committee should do more to ensure that information from the Combined Maritime Forces about illicit smuggling trends is publicly shared and brought to the attention of relevant States. We would also like to encourage the Combined Maritime Forces to work closely with the Monitoring Group to update the Committee in real time, if possible, on charcoal shipments being tracked from Somalia. Such timely intervention can lead to swift action to interdict. It can help translate our intentions and commitments in the Council into more real and meaningful changes on the ground.

Even as we tackle the challenges posed by terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and the illicit trafficking of natural resources that finance them, the Security Council must also keep a close eye on

another scourge that threatens Somalia — corruption. The mismanagement of public funds in Somalia will undercut any security gains made in the country. We therefore believe that the Federal Government of Somalia must redouble its efforts to ensure financial transparency, particularly with respect to the signing of contracts related to natural resources. We encourage the Monitoring Group to continue to focus on such issues and make appropriate recommendations to improve public financial management in Somalia.

As we fight terrorism and corruption, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that Somalis are not victimized, especially by those working to help secure their country. We are deeply disturbed by allegations that international forces bombed and launched ground attacks on civilian areas on 15 January in Gedo and in Middle Juba. We understand that this happened in the wake of an Al-Shabaab attack on the Kenyan Defence Forces of the African Union Mission in Somalia at the El Adde forward operating base. The point of fighting terrorists is to keep people safe. When the actions of those fighting terrorists potentially endangers rather than protects civilians, it merits serious scrutiny. We urge the Monitoring Group to investigate such allegations, including claims that cluster munitions were deployed in violation of international law, and report back to the Committee as soon as possible.

Finally, with regard to the situation in Eritrea, unfortunately little has changed and, frankly, it needs to. The Government's refusal to engage constructively with the Monitoring Group and the Sanctions Committee must change before anyone can take Eritrean calls for the sanctions to be lifted seriously. Obstructing the ability of the Group to fulfil its mandate, combined with further reports of Eritrean non-compliance with the sanctions, is simply at odds with the stated desire of Eritrean officials for the sanctions to be lifted. We therefore call once again upon Eritrea to respond to Monitoring Group requests for information and permit the group to travel to Eritrea.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We thank Ambassador Ramírez Carreño, Permanent Representative of Venezuela, for his briefing on the activities of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea.

We commend the activities of the Committee. The debate organized recently (see S/PV.7620) by the Venezuelan presidency on the working methods of the Security Council's subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees, was a tangible contribution to refining and making the work of the sanctions committees effective. We still hope that the Venezuelan initiative will have a positive outcome through the adoption of a President's note on the issue.

During the Uruguayan presidency, the Security Council debated in depth the situation in Somalia, developments in the country, challenges and prospects. As we have done before, we reiterate our concern about the capacity, or incapacity, of Somalian authorities to control the territories liberated from the Al-Shabaab terrorists becoming a huge challenge to ensuring the participation of thousands of Somalis in the electoral process ahead, while remaining a source of instability with the resurgence of intercommunal conflicts.

We take note with concern of the findings of the Monitoring Group regarding the illegal trade in Somali natural resources and its potential to fuel the conflict. We are of the view that, in this regard, the Security Council should adopt an unequivocal stance by strongly condemning it and taking further measures for its disruption, considering that the exploitation, management and sale of natural resources are the prerogative of State authorities.

The suggestion of the Monitoring Group regarding the ban on charcoal is a constructive one and should be supported and implemented through cooperation among Somali authorities, States Members of the United Nations and the African Union Mission in Somalia, ensuring that it is not violated through corruption and falsified documentation.

Regarding Eritrea, we are pleased to note once again that there is no evidence that the Government of Eritrea has been supporting the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. The Security Council should take note of that development and take decisions accordingly.

With regard to border and regional issues, Eritrea and Ethiopia should cease all support for armed and rebel groups that affect the internal stability of both countries. Djibouti and Eritrea should engage in good faith, under the mediation of Qatar, to address the issue of missing Djiboutian prisoners. The Government of Eritrea should strengthen its cooperation with the Monitoring Group to address the issue. The situation of instability in Yemen and its proximity to Eritrea pose a threat to the country's security. We have doubts about information on Eritrea's decision to allow the United

Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to use its territories in the fight in Yemen. It is our hope that Eritrea is not importing that conflict to its borders.

To conclude, we encourage the strengthening of relations between Somali and Eritrean authorities with the Monitoring Group, whose work we fully support, stressing that the Monitoring Group should strictly observe its mandate and not extend it of its own initiative.

Mr. Zhao Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Ramírez Carreño for his briefing and appreciate the active the work of the Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, under his able leadership.

Recently, Somalia's political process has made progress. Efforts aimed at building a federal system are proceeding steadily, and economic and social development is gradually being restored, which China welcomes. China believes that, with the help of the international community, the Somali Government and people will attain greater achievements on the path to peaceful reconstruction. China maintains that sanctions are not the end, just the means. Council sanctions against Somalia and Eritrea should contribute to promoting peace and stability in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, as well as to the counter-terrorism efforts of the Somali National Army and the African Union.

The final report of the Monitoring Group issued in October (see S/2015/802) found no evidence of support to Al-Shabaab by the Eritrean Government. In the light of the changes in the situation, the Council should make the corresponding adjustments to the relevant sanctions regime.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend the Ambassador of Venezuela for his outstanding work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea. I also express my resolute support for the work being done by the Monitoring Group.

In line with the Toledo formula, I fully endorse the statement made a short while ago by the Ambassador of New Zealand. As such, I will confine my intervention to the five most salient points.

First, with regard to transparency, this is an inescapable requirement of our time. Society calls on us to provide it and demands that the Council be democratic. For the Council to be democratic, more transparent and stronger, we must open ourselves up to the membership. Therefore, open briefings by the Chairs of the Council's subsidiary bodies should be the norm, as should be the reports of the panels of experts that support the committees.

Secondly, on the political process in Somalia, today at last, there is hope for a new Somalia, which, from reconciliation to the political dialogue, should determine to move forward along the path of progress and development for the benefit of the Somali people — with, of course, the support of the international community.

Thirdly, with regard to security, I express my sincere condolences for the victims of Al-Shabaab attacks. The victims are civilian, military and of all genders, for Al-Shabaab lacks any sort of morality. In order to rein in this violent movement, it is urgent that we adapt the strategy in the fight against Al-Shabaab to the current situation. To that end, we need to be especially determined in two aspects. The first is to impede the export of charcoal, and the second is to cut off the sources of financing. Somalis should have no doubts as to two issues: first, Al-Shabaab will be defeated and Somalia's future will not include them; secondly, the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somali National Army are on the side of the people.

Fourthly, on human rights and the humanitarian situation, I shall confine myself to stating our great concern with regard to the humanitarian situation, especially in areas under the control of Al-Shabaab. It is important that we prevent and punish violations of human rights, which are a genuine threat to the future of Somalia.

Fifthly, on Eritrea, I would like to underscore the importance of fostering a genuine and substantive dialogue between the Monitoring Group and the Government in Asmara. We welcome the visit by the Monitoring Group to Eritrea.

I would like to conclude by touching on the issue of sanctions. Spain's position on sanctions is well known. Members know that we believe that sanctions are never an end in themselves. However, they are a basic prevention tool in the Council's efforts, including to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Mr. President, Uruguay would like to thank you

for your detailed briefing in your capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea. We also welcome the fact that this briefing is open to the membership.

Uruguay would like to highlight the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia in providing information with regard to arms imports. We welcome the Committee's decision to draw the attention of Member States to providing their support for the programme to reform the security sector, which requires the necessary financial and technical assistance.

Uruguay reiterates its concern about the ongoing threat posed by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, which continues to be present despite the measures undertaken and the supposed loss of firing power. We should never let down our guard when it comes to terrorism. Also of alarm is the possibility that there may be open contacts with other extremists in the region.

Uruguay would especially like to underscore the need to protect civilians, especially women, children and older persons. We encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to seek mediation and stability, in particular in areas where access to services and humanitarian assistance is essential. At the same time, we regret the fact that national and foreign forces operating in Somalia continue to attack civilians and violate international humanitarian law.

With regard to the information provided by the Eritrea Monitoring Group, Uruguay expresses its concern about the fact that there has not been greater progress — and there may even have been a setback — in achieving stability and peace in the region — if the alleged support to armed groups in Ethiopia and Yemen is confirmed, which has not been totally ruled out.

Lastly, Uruguay expresses its support and commitment with the effort being done by the Somalia-Eritrea Sanctions Committee. We look forward to an update on its work in the months of April and October.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

With regard to the political situation in Somalia and the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) in support of the country's stability, it seems clear to us that the priority is to strengthen all of the national capacities of the Federal Government of Somalia. In that regard, we hope that the process of strengthening institutions will allow the Government effectively to control its territory and all of its economic and social activities.

However, my country expresses its deep concern about the continued presence of Al-Shabaab. Although there have been major achievements in combating this terrorist group, its asymmetric attacks against troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia, the country's national forces and Somali civilians continue to be a destabilizing element.

We are also concerned about the potential of the conflict in Yemen to impact Somalia, especially when it comes to the growth of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. If an alliance between the two were to coalesce, it could pose a serious threat to peace and security in Somalia. We call on the international community to provide all the necessary support to the State of Somalia so that it can exercise control, ensure the rule of law, extend its administration and provide services in areas liberated from Al-Shabaab, failing which those areas could fall back into the hands of terrorist groups. Although the sanctions — and the Sanctions Committee — must achieve their goal, they must be reviewed so that they can contribute to the Federal Government of Somalia effectively controlling areas being liberated from terrorists.

We are concerned that Somalia, which possesses enormous natural resources in the areas of oil, gas, fisheries and charcoal, can neither exercise nor profit from the rational exploitation of those resources, as is its right. In that regard, we should cooperate to put an end to the illegal trade in charcoal so that it is no longer a source of financing for terrorism and instead serve as a way of expanding and strengthening Somalia's capacity to effectively exploit its natural resources for the benefit of its people, who so desperately need it.

With regard to Eritrea, we emphasize that all the reports of the Monitoring Group, including its most recent report (see S/2015/801), show that no link exists between Eritrea and Al-Shabaab. Similarly, the territorial differences between Eritrea and Djibouti are under mediation through the Government of Qatar, and there are Qatari peacekeepers stationed at the border between the two countries. If we assume that the two reasons, which I mentioned previously, that gave rise to the imposition of secondary sanctions on Eritrea are no

longer applicable, we believe it is time to re-examine the validity and scope of the sanctions regime on Eritrea.

We recently held a debate on the working methods of the sanctions committees (see S/PV.7620) and the role of the monitoring groups. In the case of the Somalia and Eritrea Committee, we have a robust Monitoring Group, and some of its members have been reappointed. However, my country believes that the Monitoring Group has overreached its mandate by offering unsupported information on some issues. The first of those is the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. While the historic dispute and conflict that exists between the two countries should be resolved, in our opinion it is outside the purview of the Sanctions Committee, and an appropriate forum should be found to deal with the situation. We will have to carve out a separate space if we are to make progress with the issue of sanctions in compliance with the mandate of the Sanctions Committee on Eritrea. However, that should not be affected by the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which should be treated in another forum.

Furthermore, with regard to the question of the representative of Senegal, the presence of Eritrean troops in Yemen has not been confirmed. This is an issue related to the transparency of the reports. The Monitoring Group of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee stated that it had received "unconfirmed reports" of the presence of Eritrean soldiers in Yemen. That is an aspect that we wanted to bring up at this open meeting, because there are elements introduced by the Monitoring Group that have tended to complicate the work of the Sanctions Committee and to perpetuate the sanctions regimes on these countries.

I would also like to report that, as Chair of the Somalia and Eritrea Sanctions Committee, I have received an invitation from the President of Eritrea to visit his country. We will organize a visit in the next few months — certainly after February — with the aim of gaining a greater understanding and arriving at specific goals for facilitating the work being done between the Monitoring Group and Eritrea. I will also be able to hear at first hand the President's views on the issue, which I will then convey to the Sanctions Committee and to the Council.

Lastly, the security situation in the Horn of Africa has been greatly complicated both by the conflict in Yemen and the huge flows of small arms and light weapons into the area. We believe that the Sanctions Committee should undertake a political assessment of its scope and work. As the representative of Egypt mentioned, it is one of the oldest of the Council's Sanctions Committees. We should try to re-evaluate the situation and see how we can adapt in order to maintain and preserve peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7627

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7627th meeting

Thursday, 18 February 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Faye
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

16-04262 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Mladenov, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Jerusalem.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: I regret to inform the Security Council that the violence that has been erupting in Israel and Palestine since October of last year shows no sign of relenting. Some recent incidents may point to a troubling new phase in the conflict. On 31 January, a Palestinian security officer traveling in an official vehicle opened fire at a checkpoint near Ramallah and injured three Israeli soldiers. This was one of three incidents to date involving a member of the Palestinian security forces. Although he was acting independently, such incidents can be potentially harmful to the relationship between both security forces. On 3 February, a complex attack took place at Damascus Gate that resulted in the death of an Israeli border policewoman. In a worrying advancement in weaponry and tactics, the three assailants, all of whom were killed, carried semi-automatic weapons, pipe bombs and knives. Just a couple of hours before this meeting, in a supermarket in the West Bank, two Israelis were stabbed, one of whom later succumbed to his wounds. The two 14-year -old Palestinian attackers were shot by an armed civilian. Our thoughts go out to the families of these latest victims.

As tensions persist, Israelis continue to grapple with the fear of terrorism just as Palestinians continue to be killed and injured in clashes across the West Bank. Once again, the United Nations strongly condemns all acts of terror and violence. This spiral of violence, which has to date taken at least 137 Palestinian and 19 Israeli lives, cannot be reversed by security means alone. It must be addressed at the political level, with leaders showing a political horizon to their people and standing up to incitement and the radicals among their own constituents.

Only genuine progress towards a just peace that allows the people of Israel and the people of Palestine to live side by side in safe and secure borders will end the bloodshed and counter the rise of extremism. Against the backdrop of radicalisation, terror, sectarian violence, war and tectonic geopolitical shifts in the Middle East, peace and security for Palestine and Israel is imperative now more than ever.

Over the past year, the United States, Russia, the European Union and the Secretary-General, as part of the Middle East Quartet, have engaged actively in seeking a way forward out of the deadlock. Quartet envoys have travelled to the region to meet with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. We have consulted with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and, most recently, Norway. Since September of last year, the Quartet principals have met three times.

We have sought how not only to preserve the two-State solution, but to create the conditions that would allow the parties to return to meaningful negotiations on resolving the final status issues and ending the occupation that began in 1967. This includes steps on the ground consistent with prior agreements that both parties can take to strengthen Palestinian institutions, security and economic prospects, while upholding security for Israelis. We have voiced our common concern that the current trends on the ground — including continued acts of violence against civilians, ongoing settlement activity, and the high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures — are dangerously imperiling the viability of a two-State solution.

The commitment of the Middle East Quartet to remaining engaged with the parties and to working with key international stakeholders, the region and the Security Council is unequivocal. This is why, at their latest meeting in Munich, the principals agreed that the Quartet should prepare a report on the status quo, including recommendations on the way forward. The report should focus on the dangers of continuing on the current trajectory, identify the impediments to the two-State solution on all sides, and point the way towards restoring a political horizon. Ultimately, the report

should also help build international consensus on the way ahead.

Collective international efforts to help establish a political horizon will all be for naught absent genuine Israeli and Palestinian motivation to address the chronic realities endangering the two-State solution. From the outset, significant policy shifts by Israel, including increasing Palestinian investment and economic activity in Area C, are required to strengthen Palestinian institutions, economy and security prospects.

Israel's settlement enterprise continues to be an impediment to peace. While 2015 may have seen a slower overall pace of settlement planning and construction, the reality is that Israel continues to push forward with consolidation of its control of the West Bank. Several moves since the beginning of the year — such as the classification of new "State land" in the Jordan Valley and the approval of several plans in settlements — also appear to point towards an increase in settlement activities.

During the past few weeks alone, Israeli authorities in Area C and East Jerusalem have demolished 201 Palestinian-owned structures, including 79 that were donor-funded. As a result, 320 people were displaced. Since the beginning of 2016, Israel has demolished on average 29 Palestinian-owned structures per week, which is three times the weekly average for 2015. These actions run directly counter to the idea of peace.

Separately, we also remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating condition of Mohammed Al-Qiq, the Palestinian journalist who has been on hunger strike for over 85 days to protest against his administrative detention. I take this opportunity to once again join the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights in calling for all persons subject to administrative detention to be either charged or released immediately.

The challenge of getting back to an environment conducive to peace also falls heavily on the shoulders of the Palestinians. Advancing genuine reconciliation on the basis of non-violence, democracy and the Palestine Liberation Organization principles is a key priority. I welcome the recent unity talks in Qatar and urge all sides to continue their discussions and implement previous agreements, particularly those brokered by Egypt. The formation of a national unity Government and long-overdue elections are vital to laying the foundations of a future Palestinian State.

The issue of incitement runs to the heart of the current climate of tension and fear. It is essential that authorities on both sides do more to address this scourge. I am particularly concerned that some Palestinian factions continue to glorify violence and terror. Such acts only contribute to tensions and violence. Governance reforms must also remain a central commitment of the Palestinian Authority.

Volatility persists in Gaza amid a tenuous security situation. The collapse of another four tunnels — bringing the total to date this year to five — and the continued test-firing and launching of rockets at Israel indicate that Hamas continues to directly threaten the security of Israel. Such actions risk not only people's lives but also the fragile reconstruction process in the devastated Strip. The population of Gaza is squeezed from all sides. With little prospect of seeing public sector salaries paid, increased informal taxation and a strangled economy, tensions are rising. I have just returned from Gaza, where I visited the Al-Shujaiya neighborhood that had been devastated during the conflict in 2014. It was encouraging to see the visible positive changes and new construction as life is reborn out of the rubble, but I am all too well aware that work is yet to start on the homes of some 74 per cent of families displaced in 2014.

Rebuilding these houses, however, will not be enough. We must secure peace and focus on building Gaza for the future. This means providing clean water and sufficient energy, creating jobs and a sustainable economy, restoring free movement for people and goods and, above all, ensuring integration between the West Bank and Gaza under a single democratic and legitimate Palestinian Authority.

Turning to Lebanon, in a positive sign the Cabinet of Prime Minister Salam resumed sessions on 28 January and 2 February and approved several decrees. However, I remain deeply concerned that the presidential vacancy impairs Lebanon's ability to address the many challenges facing the country. On behalf of the Secretary-General, I call on members of the Lebanese Parliament to convene urgently and elect a President.

The recent Syria donors conference in London yielded important commitments of international support to reinforce Lebanon's stability in the face of the refugee crisis. The United Nations will continue to work closely with Lebanon to monitor and implement

commitments on the basis of the Government's statement of intent.

With respect to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, at the first tripartite meeting since the 20 December and 4 January incidents, Israel and Lebanon concurred on the need to maintain calm and stability and to ensure security along the Blue Line. Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace, however, have continued on an almost daily basis.

Turning briefly to the Golan, the situation in the vicinity of the ceasefire line continues to be of concern as fighting between the Syrian armed forces and armed groups, and between different armed groups themselves, continues. These developments have the potential to escalate the situation in an already tense regional environment.

In closing, let me return to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and appeal to the leaders of both peoples and all international stakeholders. There are clear avenues out of the current political morass, but they require unity of effort and bold, creative and courageous work on the part of many. Despite the work that has been done, the cold reality for the Israeli and Palestinian people is that all have failed them. The conflict has now arrived at a pivotal point. Israelis and Palestinians must now actively shape their future, with the dedicated support of the international community, before the opponents of peace decide their fate for them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7628

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7628th meeting
Friday, 19 February 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermudez

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/70)

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2016/138)

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16-04397 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/70)

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2016/138)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: Mr. Festus Mogae, Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission; Mr. Moustapha Soumaré, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and Mr. Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome Mr. Mogae, Mr. Soumaré and Mr. Šimonović, who are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa, Juba and Goma, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/70, which contains a letter dated 22 January 2016 addressed to the President of the Security Council from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015). I also wish to draw attention of Council members to document S/2016/138, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear briefings from Mr. Mogae, Mr. Soumaré and Mr. Šimonović, as well as Mr. Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, who will speak in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015).

I now give the floor to Mr. Mogae.

Mr. Mogae: Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to address the Security Council by video-teleconference today.

In October 2015, I was appointed to chair the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), the body charged with overseeing the implementation of the August 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The Agreement provides that the JMEC Chairperson may report to the Security Council at any time should there be need for remedial action in the implementation of the Agreement. It is my duty to report that in the months intervening since the Agreement was signed and JMEC began its work, as I reported to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union about three weeks ago, the progress made to date in implementation has been limited and lags far behind the timetables specified in the Agreement and in subsequent arrangements between the parties themselves.

Despite its imperfections, the Agreement provides the best opportunity for South Sudan to restore peace and stability. But the Agreement is only as strong as the political will that accompanies it, and, on this front, the resilience of the South Sudanese people continues to be severely tested by their leaders. Despite the repeated commitments leaders have made to uphold the Agreement, the test of timely implementation has not been met. The parties have consistently demonstrated that there is still much distrust and reluctance to overcome.

Before suggesting what could usefully be done to accelerate implementation, I should acknowledge the progress that has been made to date. First, after several months of discussion, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army In Opposition (SPLM/A In Opposition) advance team returned to the capital, Juba, in late December 2015, after JMEC intervened to determine the parameters for return. Secondly, JMEC and a number of other institutions provided for in the Agreement, such as the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism and the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, have begun to meet. Thirdly, some steps towards the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity have been

taken, including the amicable distribution of ministerial portfolios in the new Government, the appointment by President Salva Kiir of Mr. Riek Machar, in absentia, as First Vice-President, as provided for in the Agreement, and the start of redeployment of Government forces to locations at least 25 kilometres from the capital. And finally, and perhaps most crucially, the permanent ceasefire is largely holding in the former theatre of conflict of Greater Upper Nile, although as the latest events in Malakal amply demonstrate, violence continues to occur.

These achievements, though notable, should be seen in the context of a worrying escalation of instability and violence in other areas of the country, particularly in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el-Ghazal, which were regions largely unaffected by the conflict that began in late 2013. Freedom of access of ceasefire monitors is a recurrent challenge, most recently in the vicinity of the town of Mundri, Western Equatoria. While the significant reduction in violence in the most conflict-affected states of Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile is most welcome, even here the security situation remains fragile, and the tentative progress made is vulnerable to reversal if political dynamics shift.

Even if mass violence has largely subsided in the areas that experienced the most intense conflict, serious incidents are still occurring. Most recently, violence in Malakal over the past two days left at least 18 people dead, many hundreds more reportedly displaced, and significant damage to the United Nations protection-of-civilians camp, which is meant to be a place of refuge. I deplore this violence and call for a swift investigation to determine responsibility for these incidents. I urge all armed factions to show restraint.

More broadly, across the country, access restrictions and localized insecurity have made the humanitarian response extraordinarily complicated, and large parts of the country, both directly and indirectly affected by the conflict, continue to face humanitarian catastrophe, for reasons that are largely within the control of political actors. Humanitarian agencies remain unable to preposition adequate supplies before the rainy season arrives, given general insecurity and access restrictions by the authorities on both sides. So there should be no doubt that South Sudan's leaders can, if they wish, act to ameliorate the conditions in which their people live.

I witnessed the depths of the crisis when I travelled to Bor, Malakal and Bentiu — three of the conflict's worst-affected towns. Let me thank the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for its facilitation of my travel to those areas. In those three towns, I met internally displaced persons who remain in United Nations protection of civilian sites in vast numbers, but who are, I understand, only a fraction of the population affected by the conflict and its resultant crisis. Two years after the conflict began, few yet have any confidence that they will be able to return to their homes and resume normal lives. This is because political progress has been so slow and because the provisions of the Agreement, while filled with potential, have yet to demonstrate real achievement on the ground for most.

The current preoccupation of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission remains the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, which should have been formed in November 2015 following the expiry of the Agreement's pretransitional period of 90 days. The subsequent reset date, which should have led to the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity between 15 December 2015 and 15 January 2016, was also missed, as was a further date for the new Government's formation, in part because of a number of new political obstacles, not least the creation by the present Government of new administrative boundaries within South Sudan.

The calendar issued in my capacity as Chairperson of JMEC accelerated the implementation of the Agreement's provisions in the latter half of December 2015, and the obstacle of new administrative divisions, I hope, has been overcome by the latest communiqué offered by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Addis Ababa on 31 January. Despite the IGAD communiqué, which was subsequently unconditionally endorsed by the parties and the entire JMEC membership in Juba on 2 February, as of today we still do not have a Transitional Government of National Unity in place.

We are, I believe, today closer to the formation of that new Government, but the mere act of formation will not deliver relief overnight, and does not necessarily mean that the path of implementation ahead will become any easier. The new Government must quickly confront the humanitarian, development, political and military crisis that the country continues to face. In addition to these facets of the crisis, the rapid deterioration of South Sudan's economic situation in recent months is an additional challenge.

Therefore, the significance of the new Transitional Government will be determined by its performance. Does the new Government demonstrate a commitment to the ambitious but necessary reform agenda provided for in the Agreement? Can the new Government consolidate peace and effectively manage the country, which is suffering from drastically reduced revenues but facing enormous needs? Will the new Government honour its commitments to accountability and reconciliation — processes that are desperately needed in the world's newest country? We in the international community must remain vigilant if we are to ensure that the Transitional Government is not only formed, but delivers on the promises and commitments contained in the Agreement.

In order to accelerate implementation of the Agreement, a high-level, coordinated international effort, comparable to that which led to the signature of the Agreement in August 2015, must be maintained. The South Sudanese parties should not believe that they can bypass the Agreement's commitments, difficult though they may be, or that any divergence in the views of the international community can be exploited for partisan interests. Continued pressure on the parties will remain necessary because the limits of time and political will remain significant constraints. Peace is the popular demand of the people of South Sudan. Unfortunately, among South Sudan's political leadership, the threat to resort to war in the event of political dispute arises all too frequently.

The United Nations, both through the Security Council and through UNMISS, has a critical role to play. I am grateful for the willingness of UNMISS to support the return of SPLM/A in Opposition personnel — both military and civilian — as the transitional security arrangements for Juba start to be implemented. I am grateful for the support of the United Nations to the work of the ceasefire monitors now deployed in 8 out of 10 locations, most recently Yambio and Aweil, as well as the soon to be formed area joint military ceasefire committees and joint military ceasefire teams, due to play a crucial role in the consolidation of the ceasefire. I urge the United Nations to continue to play a leading role in support of JMEC and in support of the Agreement.

In support of the Agreement, I would request that the Security Council consider the following actions.

First, the Council should unequivocally state that while the Agreement does not offer solutions to all problems or fulfil all of the objectives each party pursued militarily, its genuine provisions of compromise are worth implementing in the interests of peace and reform, and that continued renegotiation of the terms of the Agreement is not an option that will be entertained.

Secondly, the Council should underscore the absolute urgency of completing the security arrangements necessary to establish the Transitional Government of National Unity, as already urged by IGAD and the African Union. In this regard, last night I received from Mr. Riek Machar, leader of the SPLM/A In Opposition, a letter in which he stated that he would travel to Juba to form the Transitional Government only once 2,910 of his police and troops were in place in the capital, with a further 1,200 police sent to Bor, Malakal and Bentiu. This proposal does not constitute a phased approach to the implementation of security arrangements for the capital, as outlined in the IGAD communiqué of 31 January. The time it would take to fully deploy these forces would incur further delay of the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. Therefore, I plan to offer a compromise proposal on security arrangements for Juba that would be sufficient to ensure security for Mr. Machar's return and consequently allow for the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. I would request the Council to endorse the principles that underpin my intended plan — security arrangements that are appropriately phased, sequenced and realistic.

Thirdly, given the fragility of the security situation in South Sudan, the continued risk of conflict and the ongoing insecurity affecting the humanitarian relief effort, the Council should demonstrate its resolve to take all necessary measures against those who seek to impede implementation of the Agreement, and to underscore the seriousness of the situation faced by the Sudanese people, half of whom are projected to need humanitarian support to survive.

Finally, while the task of implementing vital economic, humanitarian and transitional justice processes should fall principally to the South Sudanese, the United Nations could assist with a number of them, including the provision of support to the African Union in its obligation to establish the independent hybrid judicial body, the hybrid court for South Sudan, and to the commission for truth, reconciliation and healing

due to be established by the prospective Transitional Government of National Unity.

The Agreement, as I said earlier, has great potential. But for that potential to be realized, no more time should be lost, and the pace of implementation must be accelerated. Focusing the attention of the parties on implementation, and showing that the consequences of failure have ramifications far beyond individual decision makers, is critical. I thank the Security Council for this opportunity and for its continued attention to the situation in South Sudan.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Mogae for his informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Soumaré.

Mr. Soumaré: I thank you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in South Sudan, Mr. President. Since the Council has already had the benefit of listening to Mr. Mogae's briefing and will soon hear from Assistant Secretary-General Šimonović, I will focus my comments on key operational developments in South Sudan and the efforts that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is making to implement its mandate.

I would like to start by expressing the Mission's concern about the outbreaks of violence at our protection-of-civilians sites in Malakal, which have resulted in civilian deaths. I should emphasize that the United Nations strongly condemns any infringement by armed elements on the civilian character of our protection sites. As we speak, UNMISS uniformed personnel are taking robust measures to strengthen physical security within and around the site, while humanitarian partners are working to resume the delivery of essential services. Meanwhile, we are engaged at all levels with the Government, the opposition and the national security forces, as well as within communities themselves, in order to address the underlying factors and avoid a resumption of violence. Unfortunately, civilian-on-civilian violence, complicated by the presence of armed elements, continues to occur frequently within these sites and underscores the challenge the Mission faces in sustaining them.

Violence continues in many regions of the country, including areas that had previously been relatively calm. A particular worry is the deteriorating security situation in Western Bahr El Ghazal, particularly around Wau, which has escalated during the past 48 hours. Fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and organized armed groups in the area continues to threaten civilians and has resulted in a steady influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into Wau. Meanwhile, action taken by the SPLA to arrest and confront armed groups in Western Equatoria in December and January has led to widespread population displacement, with as many as 7,500 IDPs seeking protection in the compound of an international non-governmental organization near the UNMISS base in Yambio at the height of the displacement.

Elsewhere, as discussed in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/138), the rise in intercommunal violence in Jonglei, Warrap and Lakes remains a concern. In Jonglei, recent weeks have also seen a resurgence of dormant intercommunal clashes between the Lou Nuer and the Murle. Meanwhile, an internal leadership struggle among the Murle has led to a number of clashes, particularly in the Pibor area.

In response to such shifting conflict dynamics, the Mission has adopted a more agile force posture in its efforts to protect civilians affected by violence. UNMISS is focusing on projecting a physical presence away from its bases in Bentiu, Bor, Juba, Malakal and Wau through long-duration patrols and temporary operating bases in areas where insecurity is high. That includes the establishment of temporary operating bases in Leer and Mundri, which, along with the deployment of an additional company to Yambio, have strengthened the Mission's presence in Western Equatoria. In the Greater Upper Nile region, the Mission plans to deploy a regular troop presence on the west bank of the Nile, as well as within Malakal, with a focus on creating conditions that will enable IDPs to relocate voluntarily from the Malakal protection site. To strengthen physical security in Juba, the force has attempted to institute a 24/7 presence aimed at protecting civilians and United Nations personnel. However, night patrolling within the city has been constrained by the SPLA.

As the violence continues, the humanitarian needs continue to rise. An estimated 6.1 million people across South Sudan are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance as a result of interlocking threats, including armed conflict and intercommunal violence, economic decline, disease and climatic shocks. Insecurity and poor road conditions are also damaging the ability of the United Nations to pre-position humanitarian

supplies before roads are made impassable by the coming rainy season.

Despite the urgency of the task of meeting these needs, the Mission and its humanitarian partners continue to have to deal with significant constraints on their operations, including regular instances in which personnel are denied freedom of movement, as well as other violations of the Mission's status of forces agreement with the Government, which we have regularly reported to the Council and our Government counterparts.

These concerns underscore the urgent need to make progress in implementing the peace Agreement. To that end, Ms. Løj, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has been utilizing her good offices to support the work of Mr. Mogae, the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), and to engage with the parties on establishing transitional institutions. She has been convening a regular forum for international partners and friends of South Sudan aimed at consolidating support for the JMEC's efforts, a critical need that the Chair just highlighted in his statement. UNMISS also serves as a member of the JMEC partners group, which seeks to strengthen the engagement of regional and international JMEC members. The group issued a statement on 18 February fully supporting the decisions of the JMEC, while calling on the parties to grant unfettered access to humanitarian actors and ceasefire monitors.

From an operational standpoint, UNMISS has been supporting the eight monitoring and verification teams of the ceasefire monitoring mechanism, while supporting the deployment of additional teams to other critical areas. While the parties are still in the planning phase for the establishment of the Joint Operations Centre and Joint Integrated Police, UNMISS has conceptualized a preliminary training regime that can be implemented once the Joint Integrated Police is operationalized.

As President Mogae stated, it is of critical importance that the parties move ahead with the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity. Nonetheless, we must remember that its formation is but the first of many interlocking steps forward towards fully implementing the peace Agreement. Once the Transitional Government is formed, it will need to be empowered to operationalize the institutions of transition.

Above all, the Transitional Government must act to put an end to the ongoing violence that continues to displace and harm civilians, while also disrupting the delivery of critical humanitarian assistance to the people of South Sudan. The Transitional Government must also take urgent action to address the impact of economic decline, which, compounded with severe food insecurity, has left tens of thousands of vulnerable people on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe. Only the full implementation of the peace agreement, with clear peace dividends for the people of South Sudan, will help bring stability to the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Soumaré for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Šimonović.

Mr. Šimonović: I thank you, Sir, for inviting me to brief members of the Security Council on the human rights situation in South Sudan.

When the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was signed in August 2015, it was largely received with optimism that the parties to the conflict would abide by the declaration of a permanent ceasefire and halt their attacks on the civilian population. Small welcome steps have been made in the implementation of the peace Agreement, with crucial support from the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the wider international community. However, the reconciliatory rhetoric propagated by Government and opposition actors has deflected attention from the fact that the parties to the conflict continue to attack, kill, abduct, rape, arbitrarily detain and forcefully displace civilians, and pillage and destroy their property.

In the six months since the signing of the peace Agreement, a scorched-earth strategy has continued in which civilians were burned alive in their homes, their livestock raided and their means of livelihood destroyed. In the greater Upper Nile region, Government forces systematically razed villages to the ground in what appears to be a deliberate strategy to deprive perceived opposition supporters of any means of securing a living, thus forcing their displacement.

Attacks on civilians reveal horrific levels violence. In Leer county, Unity state, a survivor told our staff that her village was attacked by a mix of Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers and armed youth in late October. She described how the attackers shot and

killed her husband and then locked up her grandfather in a storage room and burned him alive.

Children's rights violations and sexual violence in conflict remain rampant, despite respective commitments signed by the parties to conflict to cease and prevent them. During an attack on Koch county, one woman described how soldiers killed her husband, then tied her to a tree and forced her to watch as her 15-year-old daughter was raped by at least 10 soldiers. UNICEF estimates that about 16,000 children have been recruited and used by all parties since the beginning of the conflict, including over 400 children in the last quarter of 2015.

Fortunately, violence in Unity and the greater Upper Nile has subsided; however, new theatres of violence are emerging in areas previously little affected by direct hostilities, notably in the Equatorias. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has received reports of killings, sexual and gender-based violence, and the destruction and looting of civilian property. In recent months, allegations of unlawful and prolonged detention, mistreatment and extrajudicial killings of civilians have been documented, particularly in Western Equatoria state. An increasing number of armed defence groups have emerged in response to the Government's highly militarized approach to addressing insecurity. With the diffusion of armed conflict in all parts of the country, and the creation of local armed groups fighting against Government troops, South Sudan faces the risk of fragmentation and related human rights violations.

While conflict-related violence remains a serious concern, human rights are under attack throughout the country. As UNMISS recently documented in a report on the human rights situation, the space for freedom of expression and dissent has narrowed considerably. Several radio stations and newspapers have been closed for having reported on topics deemed too critical of the Government or, in the case of the Al Rai newspaper, reportedly on the grounds that one of its board members had recently joined Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition.

Human rights defenders and journalists have also been intimidated, harassed, attacked, and detained. In late December 2015, it was reported that a journalist of the El Tabeer newspaper had been arrested following the publication of an article he had written, criticizing the Government's economic policy. In 2015, seven journalists were killed by unidentified gunmen. This pattern of deliberately silencing dissenting voices seriously contributes to the shrinking of democratic space and negatively impacts the attainment of a sustainable peace.

A series of reports have repeatedly concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that gross violations of international human rights law, serious violations of international humanitarian law and international crimes have been committed by the parties to the conflict. These include human rights reports of UNMISS, the report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, and the report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015).

However, no action has been taken. Perpetrators of these violations have not been held accountable. South Sudan has a long history of forgiveness and amnesties, even for the most serious crimes. To break this long-standing cycle of impunity, and to prevent future violations of international human rights law, we must ensure that the transitional justice mechanisms outlined in the Peace Agreement are implemented. Almost total impunity so far contributes to incidents such as the recent rampages, killings, wounding, burning and looting in the UNMISS protection of civilians site in Malakal. There needs to be accountability to contribute to prevention.

Chapter V of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict includes provisions to create a commission for truth, reconciliation and healing, a hybrid court for south sudan, and a compensation and reparation authority. The establishment of these mechanisms in line with international norms and standards is crucial to achieving sustainable peace, but their formation faces tremendous challenges. The need for resources will be enormous and require the international community's focus and funds over a long period of time. Once established, an independent hybrid court will only be able to put to trial the most senior officials responsible for human rights violations and abuses. However, many more perpetrators will need to face justice in South Sudanese courts, which currently do not have the capacity to conduct such trials.

In conclusion, let me put forward three recommendations. First, I urge the South Sudanese parties to the conflict to immediately cease all violations of international human rights law and international

humanitarian law. The parties to the conflict must abide by and implement their commitments made to end hostilities, to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, and to stop violations of child rights violations. The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict needs to be implemented in letter and spirit in a timely manner. Civil and military leaders have a command responsibility under international humanitarian law to prevent violations and to punish them, if they occur. Otherwise, they are responsible themselves.

Secondly, I urge members of the Security Council and regional leaders to continue engaging the parties to the conflict in that regard. It cannot be tolerated that leaders make declarations in Juba, while the hostilities and attacks on the civilian population continue and intensify across the country. Not only is South Sudan on the verge of fragmenting, but the conflict seriously threatens stability in the entire region.

Thirdly, I call on members of the Security Council and the entire international community to provide support, including financial, for the establishment of the transitional justice mechanisms outlined in the peace Agreement. The United Nations needs to extend all necessary support to the African Union and the Transitional Government of National Unity, once established, to ensure that the cycle of impunity is broken and justice is served.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on Mr. Seck.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to brief the members of the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. In my briefing, I will present the main findings and recommendations set out in the final report of the Panel of Experts (S/2016/70), which was submitted to the Committee on 14 January, as well as the results of the Committee members' consideration of its conclusions and recommendations. I will also briefly the discuss the deliberations that took place on 12 February on the report of the Panel of Experts and on the status of the implementation of sanctions during the Committee's third official meeting, held with the representatives of South Sudan and the States of the region.

In its final report, which was conveyed to the Committee on 24 December and in the presentation of the report to the Committee on 14 January, the Panel of Experts provided an overview of the security situation, the political process and the humanitarian situation, each of which I will briefly touch upon. The Panel also described in detail the chain of command and control within the Government and the opposition, which underpinned its findings in establishing the command responsibility for the actions and policies that, in the Council's view, are grounds for designation.

First, with regard to the current security situation, the Panel's final report states that, as of mid-December 2015, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict, which was signed in August 2015, had failed to an end the violence. Both parties were consistently violating the permanent ceasefire provided for by the peace Agreement, with particularly high levels of violence in Unity and Western Equatoria states. In mid-January, the Panel of Experts observed that, although a lull in the violence had been noted in some areas, including Upper Nile, violence between the communal forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army had intensified in Western Equatoria state and flared up in other regions, particularly in Western Bahr el-Ghazal. According to the Panel, both parties continued to acquire weapons and military equipment, even after signing the peace Agreement and despite the worsening humanitarian crisis, considerable economic pressures and a significant decline in Government revenues.

Secondly, with regard to the political process, the Panel's final report underscores that, as of mid-December 2015, progress towards the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity had been minimal. In the Panel's assessment, even the tentative steps taken by the parties to implement the peace Agreement of August 2015 had been offset by a number of adverse factors, including the absence of a ceasefire, the intensification of intercommunal violence in some regions, the lack of verifiable progress on the demilitarization of Juba, and the Government's decision to create 28 new states in the country, despite the request of the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, former President of Botswana Festus Mogae, who we have just heard, to refrain from pursuing the restructuring of the country. Based on those and other developments, the Panel of Experts saw no reason to believe that the Government or the opposition had made a strategic commitment to peace.

Thirdly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, the Panel stressed that the relentless war carried out by the parties had created an ever-worsening humanitarian disaster. More than 2.3 million people — one-fifth of the population — had been displaced since December 2013.

Over 3.9 million people are facing severe food insecurity and the obstruction of the flow of humanitarian aid is still widespread and systematic. The operations of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, which we have just heard about from Mr. Soumaré, were severely limited owing to the obstructive measures constantly taken by the parties, with at least 450 violations of the status of forces agreement having been committed by the Government and several dozen similar acts committed by opposition groups since March 2015. The Panel of Experts also reported that 43 humanitarian workers had been killed since the war began in late 2013.

Fourthly, the Panel based its investigations to determine the command responsibility on the definition contained in Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, to which South Sudan is a party. The definition states that command responsibility not only includes the planning and execution of violations, but also extends to the failure to prevent or punish those acts when the commander knew or had reason to know that his subordinates had committed or were likely to commit those acts.

The Panel indicated that in investigating the acts that the Council had defined in resolution 2206 (2015) as grounds for sanctions — such as acts intended to extend or prolong the conflict, violations of ceasefire agreements, violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, deliberate attacks against civilians and against the United Nations missions and humanitarian personnel — it focused its attention on those who planned and oversaw major military operations, namely, those who held strategic and operational responsibility for the military.

In doing so, the Panel insisted that those who planned and oversaw major military operations may not have ordered each and every human rights violation, but that does not absolve them from their responsibility under the internationally accepted standard of command responsibility, and especially since the violations were systematically and continuously perpetrated, and no action was taken to investigate them or punish those responsible. The Panel determined that the complex, multi-pronged military operations in Unity state and elsewhere would not have been possible without careful planning, particularly of logistics, from headquarters in Juba, and without the approval of the most senior leadership of the Government. The Panel also reported that no commanders overseeing the violation of human rights abuses had been investigated or punished by the Government. The Panel further noted that its findings about the nature of the violence during the war and the responsibility for that violence perpetrated by both sides was consistent with the findings of the African Union Commission of Inquiry.

With respect to the Panel's four recommendations, in its first recommendation the Panel proposed that, in order to achieve the Council's goal of an inclusive and sustainable peace in the South Sudan, the Committee should designate high-level decision-makers responsible for actions and policies that threaten the peace, security and stability of the country and who have the power and influence to change the course of the war. In that connection, on 12 January the Panel conveyed to the Committee a confidential annex with the names of four individuals. During his briefing on 14 January, the Coordinator noted that there was clear and convincing evidence that the majority of acts of violence committed in the course of the war had been carried out under the direction of or with the knowledge of senior officials at the highest level of Government and within the opposition.

In its second recommendation, the Panel reiterated the proposal, set out in its interim report, that the Council impose a general arms embargo on South Sudan. The Panel determined that such an arms embargo was not a punitive measure, but was in fact essential to the stabilization of the security situation in the country, and that the lifting of the embargo could therefore be tied to progress in the implementation of the peace Agreement in order to provide an incentive for the parties.

In its third recommendation the Panel suggested that the Committee call on companies engaged in business activities in South Sudan, especially in the oil and natural resource sectors, to adhere to the principles of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and to abide by the due diligence guidelines established by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in order to reinforce the implementation of the provisions of chapter IV of the August 2015 peace Agreement, in particular those regarding transparency. The Panel noted in its response to questions during the presentation of the report that some actors in the oil sector in South Sudan were already paying due attention to these guidelines in other countries.

In its fourth and final recommendation, the Panel proposed that the Committee invite all humanitarian

actors participating in the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and in the Gender-based Violence Information Management System in South Sudan to collaborate with the Panel in order to identify perpetrators of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

With regard to the Committee's consideration of the Panel's report of 14 January, the ensuing discussion was lively. The Panel heard many comments and responded to many questions, particularly those relating to its four recommendations. With regard to the Committeee's consideration of the proposed actions in connection with the Panel's four recommendations, three of which were directed to the Committee, no consensus was reached on the proposed actions regarding the four recommendations.

As I briefly mentioned in the discussion under the item "Other matters" during the Committee's consultations on 14 January, it is my intenation to visit South Sudan and several States of the region in the early part of this year. I will inform the members of the Committee of the details of my planned visit in due course.

During the 14 January consultations, I also expressed my intention to convene a formal meeting of the Committee with the representatives of South Sudan and the regional States in connection with the Panel's final report. During the meeting held on 12 February, the Committee members stressed the importance of South Sudan and the regional States implementing the travel ban and assets freeze imposed by the Security Council against six individuals starting on 1 July 2015. For their part, the invited delegations provided their views on the findings and recommendations contained in the final report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Seck for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malok (South Sudan): Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor to address the Council during your presidency, let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. Although it is rather late in the month, I would like to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. Let me also thank you and members of the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to address you on this issue of vital importance to my country.

Given the concern of the Council about the crisis situation in my country, allow me to reiterate that the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is steadfast in its commitment to the implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudanin its entirety. The commitment has been demonstrated by the establishment and operationalization of the different committees stipulated in the peace Agreement, such as the Joint Military Ceasefire Commission, the National Constitutional Amendment Committee, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism and the Strategic Defence and Security Review. These are clear precursors to a successful implementation of the peace Agreement. These entities have embarked progressively on doing what they have been asked to do, and their work is crucial to the implementation of the peace agreement.

On 11 February, His Excellency the President of the Republic of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, appointed Mr. Riek Machar, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A in Opposition), and His Excellency Mr. James Waniga First Vice-President and Vice-President, respectively. Mr. Waniga was sworn in to his new post on 12 February and has officially assumed his duties as Vice-President. As Council members already know, President Salva Kiir Mayardit appointed 50 additional members of the Parliament who had been nominated by the SPLM/A in Opposition to serve in the Transitional National Legislative Assembly. The parties also agreed on the distribution of ministerial and deputy ministerial positions in the forthcoming Transitional Governmental of National Unity. President Kiir has already nominated people who will take up the positions given to the Government, and he is ready to form the Transitional Government of National Unity as soon as the SPLM/A in Opposition and the other political parties submit the names of their nominees.

The return of Mr. Riek Machar Teny to Juba to take up his position will open a new page in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. Therefore, we call upon the Security Council and the Secretary-General to use their good offices to call on him to return to Juba for the immediate formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity.

The security arrangements required by the peace agreement for the demilitarization of the capital city was unilaterally rolled out by the Government and today Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) command has embarked through GPS and started moving forces to the new 25-kilometre-radius locations. We appeal to the international community to provide support for the establishment of new military barracks outside Juba. The South Sudan National Police Service has also finalized the list of its personnel to the Joint Integrated Police. The leadership of the South Sudan National Police Service is therefore waiting for their counterparts from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A in Opposition) to finalize the formation of the unit and the Joint Operation Centre. The support of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, therefore, is required in realization of the function of the Joint Integrated Police.

On 13 February, the joint command of the SPLA and the SPLM/A in Opposition inspected the sites allocated to be a residential area for the bodyguards of Mr. Riek Machar. The security arrangements also provide for Mr. Riek Machar Teny's security details to be in Juba prior to his return to Juba. The logistical details of such a huge force also require assistance from the international community. The security in the country has improved significantly, although we still experience insecurity in Mundri and Gbudwe from elements of the Arrow Boys. I wish I had enough time to delve into the details of the situation in those States.

The greater Western Equatoria has been the beacon of peace in South Sudan for the past 27 years, having been the first area to be liberated by the gallant SPLA forces. What we are seeing today is not the failure of politics or poor leadership for that matter, but an extension of what the world is facing. Climate change is a reality and its negative effect is what we are seeing today in my country. My Government actively participated in both the Sendai Risk Reduction Conference and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, not because of what our industries have contributed to carbon depletion since we have none, but due to what we are facing.

Today, the Dinka pastoralists cannot graze in their traditional grazing land because they do not have enough water and grass, as they used to have. That forces them to look south where they can find water and healthy grass for their animals. The newfound grazing and water sources are predominantly inhabited by farmers. Those are the causes of what we are seeing in the Gbudwe and Mundri. The Government will restore peace in the region and life will return to normalcy.

It is a well-known fact that the mainstay of the economy of the Republic of South Sudan is mainly from oil revenue. Therefore, the drop in global oil prices affected local returns in South Sudan. That, coupled with the conflict that has ravaged the country for the past three years, has made the situation dire. Nevertheless, as stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/138), the Government has introduced some reforms that are aimed at improving the economic situation of the country in the long run.

The Government further initiated negotiation with the Government of the Republic of the Sudan on the terms of the Agreement signed on 22 September 2012 between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir specifically in the area of oil transport fees through the Sudanese pipeline. President Al-Bashir agreed and the Minister of Petroleum of the Republic of the Sudan was in Juba to share ideas with his South Sudanese counterpart. To further improve the economic situation in South Sudan, the Government of the Republic of the Sudan agreed to open its border and allow free movement of goods and people between the two neighbours.

The humanitarian situation in my country will improve only when we fully implement the peace agreement. With its implementation, displaced persons will be able to go back home and resume normal life. The new non-governmental organization law promulgated in the Republic of South Sudan gave the Government the necessary tools required to restructure how humanitarian issues are managed and delivered. We call upon all stakeholders to join the Government in exercising its sovereign responsibility through the proper governance of humanitarian activities in accordance with the new law.

On 12 February, my delegation was invited by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan and regional countries neighbouring the Republic of South Sudan to discuss the state of the implementation of the sanctions regime. As we told the Committee then and I would like to reiterate the position once again before the Council today, I strongly believe that the Republic of South Sudan needs assistance, not sanctions, in

resolving the conflict it is going through. Sanctions will complicate the already complicated situation and shock it further.

We should instead focus our efforts towards the implementation of the peace agreement as the best way to foster peaceful coexistence among the people of the Republic of South Sudan. The international community can use more constructive and productive means of engaging the parties, rather than sanctions. The Government is disappointed by the plan to impose sanctions, rather than adopt measures that will encourage the parties to cooperate with the international community for peace. Sanctions at this crucial time in the history of South Sudan will only harden the stance and encourage confrontation and, above all, devastate the economy, increase economic pressures and inflict additional hardship on people who are already suffering and desperate. I call upon the Security Council not to adopt the four recommendations submitted to the Council by the Panel of Experts. Those recommendations, if adopted, will derail the milestones we have achieved so far.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the stance of my Government about the implementation of the peace agreement in letter and spirit. We call upon the Security Council and the international community to genuinely support the implementation of the peace agreement more positively both financially and morally.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the members of the Council to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.